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COLONIAL EXPERIENCES;

OR

Sketches of People and Places in the Province of

OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND.

BY

ALEXANDER BATHGATE.

GLASGOW:

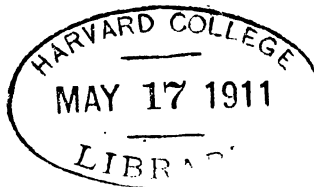
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COLONIAL EXPERIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

"NEW CHUMS," on their first arrival in the colonies, hear a great deal said on all sides about "Colonial Experience," and are apt to imagine, as many of the colonists themselves appear firmly to believe, that this phrase means a great deal, and that a man possessed of this quality has acquired a degree of infallibility to be gained nowhere out of the colonies. A person coming from England may perhaps suppose that he should be the teacher, not the taught; that the inhabitants of these antipodean

regions are a long way behind the age; but, if he assumes an air of superiority, he is surprised to find that he is looked on as immature, and perhaps patronised somewhat, for wanting "colonial experience." By-and-bye, however, he discovers that this great desideratum is a myth invented to keep new-comers, such as himself, in their proper place. The expression, notwithstanding, is not without foundation, and though the adjective might with better propriety be dropped, colonists may more readily become experienced in the ways of men of all classes, dispositions and nationalities than those who live quietly in some steady, slow-going country town in Europe; but those who have been in business in the larger cities, or have seen anything of the world, have little or nothing to learn on settling in the colonies.

The discovery of gold drew to these southern lands a motley collection of people, and they for the most part were restless, stirring, energetic fellows. It is not the plodding slow-coach or man of timid disposition who emi-

grates, for the colonists, as a people, bear the same characteristics. From the possession of these qualities, and the fickleness of fortune where gold is so eagerly sought after as here, the ups and downs in life are more frequent and noticeable than in England. The sparser population, too, prevents a man when he is "down on his luck," to use the current phrase, from disappearing altogether from the view, and the greater democratic feeling which prevails, prohibits any notions of false pride, so prevalent in the old country, from intervening between a man and any honest means of livelihood.

Colonial men appear to have a knack of turning to anything. You may meet a man who has been long in the colonies, and discover in the course of half-an-hour's conversation that he has applied himself to some half-dozen occupations during the term of his colonial residence. It is never safe to judge what a man has been or done from what he is; for instance, a man may be managing a bank on your forming

his acquaintance, and you are somewhat amazed to discover at one period of his previous history he had been a bullock-driver, carting goods to the diggings; some accident happening to his team, in disgust he left that occupation, and took to digging; not making a "pile" so quickly as he would desire, he gave that up and started in business as an auctioneer, and then losing all his money in some bad speculation, he succeeded in obtaining an appointment in a bank, and has risen to the rank in which we now find him. Another man is a thriving lawyer; he began his colonial career by mining, and was singularly successful; with his newly-acquired wealth he returned to his native place and started some kind of manufactory, by which in a few years he managed to ruin himself; still, undaunted, he returned to the colonies to find the palmiest days of the diggings gone by, and nothing else presenting itself he applied for a situation in a lawyer's office, which he obtained, in a short time was articled, and in due course passed his examination and com-

menced business as a solicitor on his own account.

This diversity of experience is by no means confined to any particular class, though it is perhaps less surprising amongst illiterate men. Such an one I have known, who had been digging as a matter of course, a seaman on board a whaler, a hotel-keeper, an auctioneer, a contractor, had speculated in shipping horses from Australia to India, and at the time I made his acquaintance was proprietor of a butcher's shop. Doubtless these men gained great experience whilst engaged in their diverse occupations, but the acquisition of it by such means always reminds me of the old story of "paying too dear for one's whistle."

Many will perhaps think that this versatility of disposition is not a valuable attainment, though the ready adaptability to circumstances which it betokens undoubtedly is. By no means a large proportion of the inhabitants of the colonies have undergone such vicissitudes or changes, but those who have are sufficient

to leaven the mass who acquire at second-hand some of the experience of the others at a cheaper rate ; thus recalling what the old farmer told his spendthrift son on his return from a trip to the city, where he had expended of the paternal substance somewhat freely : " Ah ! John," said the old man, " you should remember that a rolling stone gathers no moss." " Well, father, if it does not, it gets polished," replied the young reprobate as he superciliously surveyed the bucolic cut of his father's coat. " If your polish only regulates the style of your clothes—and I don't see much difference in you, barring that—it's not worth the price you've paid for it, John, for have you not seen that since you came home several of the young bucks in the village have copied the pattern of your coat to a nicety, and so got as much polish as you for next to nothing."

There is a recklessness about many colonists which begets an unwonted degree of caution in others ; this shows itself not merely in commercial life, but in almost every department.

An instance of this recklessness recently came under my notice, and though the scene lay in a neighbouring colony, it may be related as illustrative of my meaning. A man belonging to the middle rank of life had emigrated to Australia, and invested what little money he had in a quartz mine—for a time all prospered, and he wrote home to a lady whom he had for some years been engaged to marry, urging her to come and join him—before, however, the young lady arrived the quartz ran out, and the shares fell from a high value to absolutely nothing, and our friend was ruined. Just at this time he received a letter telling him his *fiancée* had sailed—he borrowed twenty pounds from a friend, and proceeded to the seaport to await her arrival—her ship came in before long, and he, like a fool, without apprising her of his altered circumstances, married her at once. The sequel is soon told. His wife's recriminations caused him to take to drinking; she followed suit, and the last I heard of them was, that this woman, born and educated a lady, was

living in a miserable hut with several squalid-looking children, supplementing the small portion of her husband's earnings which he brought home, by doing a little washing for the surrounding diggers.

This is without doubt an extreme case, but I have sometimes seen men, in different ways, act with as much indifference to what were apparently the inevitable consequences of their actions, and perhaps, after all, we have not more of this sort of person in the colonies than could be found in the home-land, but there is this difference, that in the latter they sink more rapidly and completely out of sight.

In a country where labour is so dear as it is here, most people have had, at some time or other, to do things for themselves which, had they remained in the country whence they came, they would never have thought of attempting, besides having to "rough it" occasionally. If an unfortunate new chum ventures mildly to protest against some trifling hardships, he is at once silenced by being told

that it is evident he is not "colonised" yet, and that he must get used to such things. If any particular philologist should read this, he will probably object to the word colonised in place of the more correct but uglier word colonialised, but he would find it a vain task to attempt to argue the colonists into the use of any other. A man of aristocratic proclivities would have to undergo more colonising than another; he would soon have to learn the meaning of the proverb that "Jack was as good as his master," as any appearance of what may be termed "uppishness" would be quickly resented.

One, recently arrived from England, on going to look at a property belonging to a friend, found a labourer leisurely surveying the premises. With an eye to his friend's interests, and thinking to annihilate the intruder at once, the gentleman pompously asked him if he was aware he had no right to be there. The workman, recognising that his interrogator was a new chum, replied, "Oh! we make rights for ourselves in this country." This unlooked-for

reply caused the complete collapse of the would-be annihilator, but he relieved his feelings afterwards by storming to his friend against the insolence of the lower classes, and nearly quarrelling with the latter for his advising him not to use the adjective lower in this country. Fortunately for his subsequent peace of mind, this individual did not remain long in the colony.

Other men, again, are so wonderfully "green" and unsophisticated that, no matter where they went, they would have a vast deal to learn. One of the kind I refer to, on his being told that if he went up country, as he spoke of doing, he would have to rough it a bit, said, "Oh! I should not mind that much, so long as I can get a cutlet and a glass of sherry for lunch, I am not particular about the rest of the day." It takes many a hard rub before such men as these acquire any colonial experience.

The following pages contain a few of the writer's experiences, to which have been added

one or two chapters giving a little information about the country. Some of the chapters were written before the idea of publishing them in their present form suggested itself, and to this is to be attributed any apparent disjointedness which it is now too late to remedy.

CHAPTER II.

Dunedin.

THE name of the capital of Otago is a peculiarly happy one. It combines the charm of association with that of novelty. Being the disused yet familiar Celtic name of the capital of Scotland, it awakens within every Scotchman the remembrance of his native land, yet as the appellation is never now applied to "Auld Reekie," and there is no other town of the same name, no confusion is created. The people of Dunedin, however, narrowly escaped the barbarity of having their infant city christened New Edinburgh, that being the original intention of the founders of the settlement of Otago,

when fortunately Dr. William Chambers, the eminent publisher, seeing some mention of the proposal, wrote to the newspapers suggesting the present name. The idea was caught at, and the change made; even in minor respects there is much to remind one from Edinburgh of the parent city. Most of the streets are called after those of the Dunedin of the northern hemisphere, the stream that flows through the north end of the town bears a name well-known to the inhabitants of Midlothian, the "Water of Leith," and then down the bay there is an embryo watering place designated "Portobello." There is nothing, however, in the natural situation or general aspect of the town itself which recalls the "Modern Athens," although a Dunedinite might well exclaim with Scott, "mine own romantic town."

The city of Dunedin is situated at the head of a long narrow bay running almost parallel with the sea-board, so that though it is about twenty miles from the entrance to the bay, it lies distant not more than three from the ocean.

The passage from the heads or entrance up to Dunedin is through a panorama of rare beauty. The hills which rise on both sides are wooded down to the water's edge, brightened and relieved by the clearings and homesteads of the settlers. The former are year by year becoming larger, and are already too large and numerous for the beauty of the scene, but as the settlers on the sunny slopes of the "Peninsula" doubtless study more the growth of early potatoes than æsthetics, Dunedin must submit to lose in time a little of its loveliness. But it will only be a little, for man the destroyer cannot change the outline of the hills, nor wholly rob their sides of verdure.

About half-way up the bay lie two islands, and beyond these, vessels of large burden do not proceed. Here, therefore, is situated the port of Otago, now connected with Dunedin by a railway, while steamers also ply on the water. The pilgrim fathers of the Province called their harbour Port-Chalmers after the Scottish divine, which name it still bears. I was amused once

with the remark of a cockney girl who, on arriving in port when everything was looking its best in the bright sunlight, exclaimed, with her English accent, "No wonder that they call this Port-Chalmers, it would charm any one." Her knowledge of Free kirk luminaries, if not of the body itself, must have been small. As the channels above the islands are narrow and shallow, only the smaller coasting vessels and steamers go on to the city. The appearance of the bay is rather disfigured in places by large mud banks left bare at low water, but their ugliness is in some measure atoned for by the presence of beds of oysters and cockles. These banks are also a hindrance to boating, nevertheless several gentlemen of the place persevere in yachting, and there is even an Otago yacht club.

The traveller sees nothing of Dunedin till he reaches the head of the bay, when, rounding a promontory, the fair city stands before him. The fact of the buildings, on the higher grounds especially, being built of wood and painted with

light colours, imparts a clean bright appearance.
Sited upon the hill-side they rise

“Line o’er line, terrace o’er terrace,
Nearer still and nearer to the blue heavens.”

On a closer approach the stranger distinguishes the business part of the town lying on the narrow strip of comparatively level land at the base of the hills. Viewed from the water, this portion of the city presents a confused appearance, but many buildings of white or blue stone or red brick may be distinguished, and though a few tall chimneys are discernible, smoke and age have not as yet removed the charm of colour, and toned everything down into an uniform grey. About the centre of the town the new Presbyterian church, a handsome building of the whitest stone, recently erected at a cost of £16,000, stands prominently forth. To the right is a considerable tract of flat land, well covered with buildings, the most conspicuous amongst which is the hospital, a large structure, built originally for the New Zealand exhibition.

The hills forming the background are to the right covered with native forest, while on the other side they are bare and grassy. Further to the left lies a stretch of low land, bounded by a line of sandy hillocks, on the other side of which is the ocean ; the whole forms a picture not often surpassed in beauty, and seldom equalled.

Strangers from England are usually surprised with the aspect of Dunedin, for as a rule they always expect something decidedly primitive, but when they reach the streets, and see the busy throng of people and vehicles of all kinds, and the piles of handsome and substantial buildings, they can hardly believe that all this has sprung up not merely within the recollection of the oldest inhabitant, but within that of those who have hardly attained man's estate. The visitor may, if he be of a meditative turn of mind, find food for contemplation in the thought that every one, except the youngest, has come hither from other parts of the world, and ponder on the many influences which have

drawn these people together. There is no doubt that Dunedin is a fine town for its age and that it contains many fair and even good buildings. The University, built of white Oamaru limestone, is perhaps the finest, except the church already mentioned; it stands in the centre of the business part of the town, and notwithstanding that its site is a disadvantageous one, being rather low, it is a commanding edifice. The Banks and government buildings too, would attract notice, as well as many of the warehouses, and every year is fertile in some improvements.

The narrowness of the streets is a defect which would probably not escape observation. It is frequently regretted by the inhabitants, but to this I think is partially due the absence of newness in the appearance of the place, which is remarkable. The chief thoroughfare is Princes Street, which, with its continuation, George Street, runs along the base of the hills fully two miles. From this main artery, streets diverge on the one hand to the hills, and on the

other to the level ground, this at the south end is very narrow, (the result of reclamation from the harbour,) but it is much wider to the northward.

It is said that the town was laid out in the old country, and certainly the manner in which the streets have been taken up the hills shows an absence of regard for the natural contour of the ground, which seems to lend some colour to the story. The same thing is to be found, however, in the country surveys, where the surveyors have evidently regarded a straight line as a "thing of beauty," and I doubt not they often looked upon a river that would not flow in an undeviating course as a blemish to their maps. The streets upon the hills have been formed, however, as originally laid out, though in some instances at a great expense of earthwork. If climbing hills be conducive to hardiness in a people, the citizens of Dunedin should excel in that quality, for one can hardly go anywhere without ascending an incline.

Most of the houses built on these hills are accessible with horses and carts, though there are a few streets up which it is impossible to drive. There is a reward, however, for living on the heights, as the houses command a magnificent prospect. The "new chum" direct from the home country is often astonished to find nearly every one, both rich and poor, living in wooden houses, and also to find what comfortable houses they are. In the business part of the city, stone and brick are predominant, but wood will long be the favourite material for dwelling-houses, especially as we have not to withstand anything like the rigour of an English winter.

Dunedinites talk of their town as being the commercial capital of New Zealand, and it is not without reason that they assume this position. Dunedin "bagmen" are to be met with all over the colony, and a considerable amount of business is done with some of the other provinces. This entails the keeping of larger stocks than would be necessary for mere local requirements. Talking recently with one of the

wholesale ironmongers, he informed me that their stock at the last taking was valued at £70,000. Dunedin does not, however, derive so much benefit from this commercial pre-eminence as might be supposed, for many of the wholesale houses in all departments of trade are mere branches of large foreign firms, and the most of the profits are withdrawn to be spent in England and elsewhere. This absenteeism is one of the colonial bugbears, and one of the strong arguments for an income-tax. We have in Dunedin many instances of sections of land owned by people who never saw the place, and who yet draw large ground rents, taking care, however, that their tenants pay all the taxes.

From the large numbers of the Tasmanian blue gums (*encalyptus globosus*) which have been planted about the town, Dunedin might almost be re-named the city of gums. These trees are quite a feature in the place, and have come into favour chiefly on account of their rapid growth. They will attain the height of

from sixty to seventy feet in ten or fourteen years. But, though not ungraceful, they are lacking in beauty, on account of their sombre foliage. Poplars and willows are also favourites for the same reason, especially the weeping willow, to which there is attached a slight historical association not uninteresting. When the French made their unsuccessful attempt to colonise New Zealand, and sent a vessel with emigrants, the ship touched at St. Helena, and the passengers possessed themselves of some slips of the willow which overshadowed the grave of the mighty warrior who once slept there. The slips grew, and when the vessel reached her destined port, Akaroa, in the province of Canterbury, the young trees were transferred to New Zealand soil, where they grew and flourished, and became the parent plants of most, if not of all, the weeping willows in the southern provinces of the colony.

Credit is due to those who laid off the town of Dunedin for their forethought in reserving for the purposes of recreation a belt of land

round the town, excepting, of necessity, the side which has a water frontage. This town-belt, as it is called, is pretty much in a state of nature, except in one or two places which have been improved, notably the piece used as a cricket ground, and also another portion which has been laid off with considerable taste as public gardens. Part of this reserve is also used as a golfing ground, and the enthusiastic players, dressed in red coats and followed by their "caddies," are to be seen enjoying the game all the year round ; schemes have frequently been mooted for the improvement of the whole, and will doubtless be one day carried into effect. Many villas have been nested beyond this belt, and several suburban villages or, in colonial parlance, townships, have already sprung up.

The Scotch origin of the province is evidenced by the fact that out of the thirteen places of worship in Dunedin proper, four are Presbyterian, while two are Episcopalian, and various other denominations are represented by one each. The Hebrews are strong enough to possess a

synagogue, which would seem to indicate that the Scotch settlers, in the transfer from their fatherland to a more kindly clime, have left behind a little of their proverbial "canniness."

There is no lack of amusement in Dunedin. Artists of all descriptions are continually coming and going, and there are two theatres, sometimes both with very fair companies. The Athenæum is a creditable institution, the reading-room belonging to it being particularly well supplied with papers and periodicals, both home and colonial,—altogether, any one may, no matter what his taste may be, pass his time very pleasantly in Dunedin.

CHAPTER III.

"Old Identities."

THE phrase at the head of this chapter is one familiar in the ears of all Otagans as household words. It was the name applied by the people of Victoria, who flocked hither in thousands on the discovery of gold, to those who had been in the province before that time. Those honest folks, the tenour of whose ways had previously been very even, were greatly startled by this immense and sudden influx of population. Sixteen thousand persons landed in three months, and everything went up to worse than famine prices. It is alleged that one minister actually prayed that the stream of rogues and vagabonds

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which was flowing into the country might be stayed, but this I believe to have been a base invention of the "new iniquity," as the newcomers were nicknamed.

The term "old identities" took its origin from an expression in a speech made by one of the members of the Provincial Council, Mr. E. B. Cargill, who, in speaking of the new arrivals, said that the early settlers should endeavour to preserve their old identity. The strangers, who were inclined to laugh at the aboriginals as a set of old stagers, caught up the phrase, and dubbed them "old identities." A comic singer helped to perpetuate the name by writing a song, the refrain of which was something in this style—

"Touch not that shaky jetty,
Let that old post-office be,
That's one way to preserve
Your old identity."

So that anything effete came to be styled a regular "old identity." So much did the name come to be a term of reproach among the

Australian diggers that the barracouta (*thyrsites atum*), a rather coarse fish, very abundant at certain seasons, and which was consequently very cheap and a great favourite with boarding-house keepers, was christened by them "the old identity."

The new-comers marvelled greatly at the Arcadian simplicity which they found prevailing at the time of their arrival, and had many a joke at the expense of the former settlers. There is a story told of one of these who was fortunate enough to be the owner of a site in a commanding position not far from the jetty or wharf. At the first of the rush, one of the "new iniquity," seeing the advantageous position of the site for business premises, entered the shop and offered the proprietor as many thousands as the owner a week or two before would have taken hundreds for his property. The honest old man was quite staggered by the offer. At first he was inclined to think the intending purchaser joking, or that he was a lunatic, but when he recovered from his surprise and found

the stranger really meant what he said, and was to all appearance sane, his wrath knew no bounds. "Get out of my shop instantly," he exclaimed, "you can't have come by your money honestly to offer me such a price, get out with ye." For a few days it was a standing joke among the new arrivals to go and offer the old man most fabulous prices for his land.

This state of things did not last long, "the identities" soon learning to open their mouths as wide as any one when asked to sell. Indeed, some of them got too greedy, and did not sell when they might have done, and thus lost the chance, for, in a couple of years or so, real property suffered a considerable depreciation in value. Many of those who had the nerve and sagacity to sell at the right time realized fortunes. However, after passing through a period of depression, property has for some time risen steadily, and has now attained as high a value as it reached in the times of the rush, with little chance of again falling.

But to return to the early days of the province, when the inhabitants preserved their pristine simplicity. Otago was originally colonised by Scotchmen, and was a Free Church settlement. The idea of forming such a settlement was originated by the late Edward Gibbon Wakefield, and an Otago association was formed under the auspices of the New Zealand Company. A tract of land was purchased by this company from the natives, and their title was further confirmed by a grant from the crown of the Otago Block. A prospectus of the scheme was published, and Scotland extensively canvassed for buyers of the lands in the proposed settlement. The price put upon the land was at the rate of £2 per acre, and of the proceeds of the sales, which were all received by the New Zealand Company in the first place, only one-fourth was to be their absolute property. The rest was to be devoted to encouraging emigration, the forming of roads, and also for religious and educational purposes.

After several delays, the pioneers, numbering a little over three hundred, sailed in two vessels, named "John Wickliffe" and the "Philip Laing;" this took place in the end of 1847. The expedition was led by Captain William Cargill, and the Rev. Dr. Burns was appointed first minister of the emigrants. Owing partly to their location, which was then deemed a long distance, and out of the way from any of the other inhabited parts of the colony, these hardy pioneers had, besides the other hardships incident to the making of homes for themselves in a new and uninhabited country, frequently to put up with short supplies of the necessaries of life. At one time many of the settlers became disheartened at their prospects, and seriously discussed the propriety of abandoning their infant settlement, and a meeting was called in October, 1850, to consider the advisability of such a step, which does not appear, however, to have led to anything. In 1853, after the passing of the New Zealand constitution act, the first election of superintendent took place,

when Captain Cargill was chosen for the office without opposition.

Like many another small and comparatively isolated community, the inhabitants split up into parties, and bickered and quarrelled considerably amongst themselves. It was alleged that they were as intolerant as any Cameronian at the introduction of any foreign element in their midst. The few Englishmen who had the hardihood to "locate" themselves in Otago in those days were united together for purposes of self-defence, and were known as the "little enemy."

The flocks and herds of the settlers had in the meantime increased, and the wealth of the province grown steadily. The opening of steam communication with the Australian colonies gave the settlers a market for their grain, and things were in a state of quiet prosperity, when everyone was startled by the announcement of the discovery of gold. One would be amused if he only knew how simple were the people of those early times, even the elaborate machinery

of the Provincial Council did not awaken awe in the rustic bosom. The business of the Council is conducted on the model of the Imperial House of Commons, and even now there is an absurdity about this, although the sums appropriated amount to over £700,700,* as against £1,995,† twenty years ago. In proof of this simplicity, there is a story told that one of the worthy legislators in the olden days had a boat on hand to finish by a certain time, so that his legislative duties rather interfered with the administration of his business, but by a master stroke he arranged to combine both. The council chamber was not far from the beach, and thither he brought his boat and caulking irons; during the debate he retired to the shore, and spent his time in hammering in the oakum, having previously made arrangements to be called when his presence was required. Ever and anon the

* £707,912, 14s. 2d. is the amount of the appropriation ordinances for 1873-74, which, however, provide for the construction of several public works to be paid for in land.

† Amount of appropriation ordinance for year ending 30th October, 1854.

sergeant-at-arms, or whatever the factotum was called, might have been seen bustling out of the council, and shouting in a stentorian voice from the door-step, "Jimmy, vote," "Vote man, Jimmy," whereupon Jimmy threw down his caulking iron and maul, and ran towards the council chamber, struggling into his coat as he went. On another occasion, the grave deliberations of this solemn conclave were rudely disturbed by a shrill voice bawling from the door, "Father, John Thompson's comed for his breeks."

Those primitive times have completely passed away, so that hardly more than the memory of them remains. The old identities were rudely awakened and soon forgotten on the discovery of gold, and though some regret their former humdrum peaceful life, when money was made slowly but surely, others are not the least behind in the race, but are amongst the most pushing and energetic citizens of a stirring and energetic city. Had the early settlers not been men of energy and perseverance, they would

not have been likely to select Otago as the field of their labours. Otago, even in the northern parts of the colony, was in those days looked upon as an uninhabitable tract of country, and there were undoubtedly many difficulties to contend with, not the least of these being the bad roads.

The roads or tracks, owing to the nature of the clay, used to become utterly impassable for anything with wheels after a few days' rain, and would, in the winter, remain for months perfect quagmires of most tenacious yellow clay, rendering travelling on foot almost impracticable, especially for ladies, but the latter, as fond of tea and its accompaniments here as elsewhere, were wont, nothing daunted, to go out to such social gatherings in a bullock sledge. If any of them were hardy enough to make the attempt to visit their friends on foot, they were lucky if they reached their destination without having to be dug out of the mud; even in the streets of Dunedin ladies have left their boots stuck fast in the clay. But this

desire to interchange ideas or gossip under such difficulties is not to be wondered at, seeing communication with the outer world was of rare occurrence. Ships from home seldom came, and when they did, it was news six months old they brought, the voyage then occupying double the time it does now. With all their faults, the founders of the settlement did their work nobly and well, and, although birds of passage may joke at their expense, Otago has every reason to be proud of her "old identities."

CHAPTER IV.

"What induced you to Emigrate?"

THE answer which is most frequently given to this question is, "Because I hoped I should better myself," but odd reasons are often assigned for having taken such a step. Frequently you meet with men who can assign no reason in particular, they having perhaps left home without any intention of settling in New Zealand, and circumstances led them to do so. I heard of a very singular case, in which the reason assigned was as odd a one as could be imagined. The person referred to was a young man of about thirty, and was a jolly, careless sort of fellow. I was therefore surprised to

hear him one day speaking of the fair sex in anything but flattering terms. I expressed my surprise to a friend, who replied, "Don't you know what brought Brown out here?" and, on my answering in the negative, he said, "Thereby hangs a tale; he made a confidant of me not long after he arrived in the country, so I can tell you the reason, as he makes no secret of it now. Brown's father, you know, is a wealthy man, and does a very large business in the old country. He purposed retiring, for he was approaching sixty, and had taken his son into partnership. Young Brown was engaged to be married to an exceedingly pretty girl, and apparently was excessively fond of her. But the sequel proved that she had not cared much for him, or at least that she was not as good as pretty. Brown lived in his father's house, and his *fiancée* came to visit there a while, as his sisters were anxious to make her acquaintance. They were quite charmed with their new sister, and old Brown congratulated his son on his good fortune, regretting that his mother had

not lived to see her boy's bride, and hinted that he would come down with something handsome to assist him in setting up his establishment. Brown was delighted, and urged that the wedding-day should be fixed at once. To this, however, the young lady would not consent, 'not just then,' she said. The long and the short of the story is that poor Brown had to leave home on some urgent business, and on his return he found that his father had married and run off with the young lady! Brown, when he was consoled with on his being told the story, had the pluck to say, 'I am lucky to be quit of the little hypocrite; she must have been thinking of this little game, even when I kissed her when I found her alone in the drawing room the day I left, confound her.' He packed up his traps and left the house as quickly as he had entered it, and next day he took his passage in a ship just about to sail for Otago, and here he is still. Speaking of the affair, he says he does not blame his father now, though he did at first, she was such a pretty,

fascinating viper." The next time I spoke to him, my tone must have been a compassionate one, for before answering my question he asked if I were ill. I have not seen or heard anything of him for some time, but I don't think he'll do much good for himself till his faith in womanhood is restored, as nothing else is likely to break him from his happy-go-lucky style of life.

Another case I knew of was almost equally curious, and as usual there was a woman in it, but her part was a most tragic one. I had got into conversation with Dick, the groom at an up-country hotel, at which I was staying for a few days. In the course of our talk on the (to him) most congenial subject, horses, he mentioned incidentally that he had belonged while in England to a circus troupe. I asked how he liked that life; his answer was that he passed some of the happiest days of his life there, and yet that he would not resume his connection with a circus for a mint of money. He had been a friendless lad, and had never

known his father or mother; he was brought up by an uncle, who treated him so cruelly that he ran away from him when he was about sixteen years old. He joined the circus company, by whom he was employed as a groom and odd boy, which station he filled till he got promoted to be one of the riders. When he was about two-and-twenty, the circus company was augmented by the addition of a father and his daughter, a pretty girl of eighteen. Dick and she fell in love, and before very long were married.

One cannot fancy that the atmosphere of a travelling circus would be conducive to conjugal felicity; however, the young couple seem to have been very happy. As Dick said, his wife was his first friend, for he had not experienced much kindness in his early days, and he loved and valued her all the more. They had been married about four months, when one day they were going through a performance on horseback together, she riding first, leaping through hoops and dancing, he

following in pursuit; and they had come to a part in which he was supposed to overtake her, when, just as Dick came up with his wife, some fool threw a piece of orange peel into the ring, causing her horse to swerve, and she to lose her balance—she fell. Dick was too close to check his horse; even before he could think, he passed over her,—a wild shriek rose from the spectators as he did so. It was the work of a moment to leap to the ground, and spring to where she lay. Poor fellow, as he told me of it, after the lapse of fully ten years, his voice quivered. He thought she had fainted, she lay so still; but, as he gently raised her in his arms, a little blood oozing from her lips and nostrils told that she was hurt. A sudden horror seized Dick; he put his hand to her breast, there was no beating, placed his cheek to her mouth, there was no breath. “Oh my God! she can’t be dead,” poor Dick exclaimed; a half groan from the crowd seemed to him to be an affirmative answer, and he dropped senseless on the ground. It was too true, his fair young wife

was gone—the horse had trodden on her bosom, and crushed her loving heart, Dick's only consolation being that the poor girl had not suffered. For some time after the accident, he went about like one dazed, and it was not till after the funeral that he realised his loss. Loveless though his childhood, and friendless his boyhood, he never knew till then what loneliness really was. The very sight of a circus tent occasioned a renewed pang of grief, and as for resuming his former occupation it was not to be thought of. With a view of removing himself as far as possible from his loss, Dick emigrated to New Zealand. The story astonished me not a little.

It may be asked if most of those who emigrate, with the expectation of bettering their circumstances, really do so. I have no hesitation in answering such a question in the affirmative. To say that all did so, would be too sweeping an assertion, but this I will say, that as a rule if people do not, it is their own fault. The rule, like all others, is not without exceptions—mis-

fortune visits these shores as well as other lands, and, unfortunately, the grumblings of the unlucky ones more often find their way into the British newspapers than the rejoicings of the prosperous. Mechanics, artizans and labourers, however, are those most likely to better themselves and save money, if they keep steady and do not acquire extravagant habits. An up-country draper once complained to me of the expensive style in which some men lived, and told me of a mechanic he had visited that day at his dinner-hour, in order to get payment of an account. He found him sitting down to a table covered with a snowy cloth, set out with boiled fowl and vegetables and bottled porter, and apparent signs of a pudding to follow. The draper did not get his money, but railed against such extravagant living, saying that such a fellow could only occasionally have seen butcher-meat in the old country, and certainly not bottled porter to wash it down.

When men are engaged, either for stations or otherwise, where they are found in rations,

they expect to receive tea and meat three times a day, and still you may hear some of these very men complaining; those who at home lived on porridge or brose from one end of the year to the other being most probably the worst. It is a curious phase of colonial human nature, the disposition to grumble at their lot without cause. I remember, when dining in a hotel in a digging's town, the conversation turning on the differences between home and the colonies, a man present, who had been playing billiards all morning, and who, by his own account, had been a baker in a country village in Scotland, said that he thought the old country was best, that money might come in in pennies and half-pennies, but it was steadier and altogether preferable. The landlord laughed at him, saying, "Why, man, you have lost as much at billiards this morning as you would make in two or three days where you come from." The grumbler was forced to admit the truth of the assertion.

In Dunedin, very many working men live in

their own freehold cottages, and some of the suburbs are almost exclusively filled with neat little houses, owned by working men. It may be laid down as a general principle that any man who likes to work and can use his hands will succeed, but I cannot advise clerks and shopmen and men of that stamp to come here. The demand is limited, and frequently employers bring out those of whom they have known something at home, to say nothing of there being a crop of colonial youths to fill most situations. The two classes for whom there is plenty of room in the colony, leaving servant girls out of the question, are capitalists and working-men. Some men come to the colonies with the anticipation of amassing a fortune without exerting themselves, and seem to expect to find the streets paved with gold. Amongst these are many young fellows, often fairly educated, but not brought up with any idea of business or trade of any kind, and the answer that is given by them, that they will do anything, is always interpreted by old

colonists that they are fit for nothing, and they not unfrequently sink to menial positions. "Micawbers" don't in reality rise to the position of police magistrates in the colonies any more than at home.

CHAPTER V.

Local Industries.

TEN years ago, when I first came to the province of Otago, I was astonished at the multitude of articles in daily consumption which were imported. Everything came from somewhere else; even live stock was being largely imported from Australia; a tendency to despise anything of local growth or manufacture was manifest everywhere; bacon came from Belfast, butter from Cork, cheese from Cheddar, flour from California, oat-meal from Glasgow, and beer from Burton-on-Trent; and this was the case with everything else. There is now, happily, a great change in this respect; we

eat Otago cheese and butter, bake our bread with Otago flour, and the once often-quoted brands of Cory and Sinclair would hardly be obtainable from any dealer in bacon.

The brewing of beer was among the first industries started, but it was some time before it made much headway against the imported article, which it has now, however, almost completely displaced. In Dunedin there are at least five breweries in full operation, and several others in the various country townships. Otago beer is exported to the northern provinces as well as to Melbourne, and I have heard that it is in contemplation by one firm to ship beer to India. Favoured by a protective duty, the distillation of spirits has also been commenced on a large scale, and Dunedin has now a distillery capable of turning out over two thousand gallons of spirits in a week. This firm employs about thirty hands.

Although a protective tariff has never been introduced in New Zealand, and the battle of protection *versus* free trade, so hotly contested

in some colonies, has never been fought here, yet much has been done to foster local industries both by the general and provincial governments. The course hitherto adopted is that of offering sums of money for the manufacture of certain articles in the colony. By this means a woollen factory has been most successfully established in this province. The provincial government offered the sum of £1,500 on the following terms:—On the production of woollen goods manufactured within the province of the value of £750 the sum of £500, and the balance in two sums of £500 each on the production of further quantities of the value of £1,000 and £1,500 respectively. Induced by this, an old Otago settler proceeded to Britain, and brought out with him, from the south of Scotland, skilled operatives and machinery, and established a manufactory for tweeds and woollen goods. He fulfilled the conditions and gained the bonus, besides establishing an excellent and increasing business—increasing to such an extent that the proprietor

has ordered more extensive machinery from England. Now that the industry has been so thoroughly and successfully planted, I see no reason why it should not gradually grow till New Zealand becomes a large exporter of wool, manufactured as well as raw.

Similar bonuses have been offered for the establishment of manufactures of paper, glass, dried fish, sacking, wool-packs, and similar fabrics from native fibre; and steel and iron smelting from native ore. The sacking manufacture is likely to be instituted in a few months, and there are two intending applicants for the paper bonus. Various native plants have been spoken of as being likely to furnish excellent raw material for paper-making, but no experiments have been made on any extensive scale. The wiry tussock grass, which covers thousands upon thousands of acres, is said to bear a great resemblance to the esparto grass of Spain, and if it should prove suitable for paper-making purposes, we have enough of it to supply the world.

Of all our native plants, that which has

attracted most attention is the New Zealand flax, or *phormium tenax*. Its tall ensiform leaves have long supplied the settler with a handy substitute for cordage. He ties up a broken rail of his garden fence and laces his boot with a strip split from the leaves; the fibre, scraped clean with a knife, furnishes a lash for his stock whip, and the viscous gum which collects near the butt of the leaves supplies him with a strong cement. Hence it became to be a matter of every-day regret that some process could not be discovered for utilising the good qualities of this plant. I remember once stumbling across an old man busily engaged in cutting flax in the Dunedin town belt, and, surprised at his unusual occupation, I stopped and spoke to him. He said he was employed by some one who was experimenting with it, and added that if some means of dressing it profitably could be discovered, a great "*stimulus*" would be given to the province. The difficulty has always been, not the successful cleaning of the fibre, but the doing so at a

price that would pay. This desideratum has at length been obtained, and, though flax dressing is now a permanent industry, the expected stimulus is not observable in the general prosperity of the colony.

The making of twine and rope followed the successful dressing of flax, as a matter of course. One enterprising colonist has gone into this industry pretty extensively, having brought some of his employees from Arbroath.

Fish are now dried for house consumption, and the bonus alluded to is offered by the general government, and is to be paid at the rate of four shillings per cwt. on all fish dried in the colony, and *bond fide* exported from it up till November, 1879. We possess quantities of fine fish close to our shores, and the trials made in deep-sea fishing, which has, unfortunately, not yet been prosecuted with vigour, have been attended with promises of the best results for this pursuit, if properly set about. A market for large quantities of dried fish would be obtained in the Roman Catholic

States of South America, and the Mauritius and China would, in all probability, become customers for the same article, which would thus furnish an equivalent for the supplies of sugar and tea we now obtain thence direct.

Dunedin possesses no fewer than five iron foundries, all of which are kept fully employed, and generally have almost more work than they are able to overtake, the flax-dressing machines and quartz-crushing batteries used throughout the province, besides other machinery, being mostly made here. Orders are also received from other provinces to the northward, and Dunedin bids fair to become the manufacturing, as well as commercial, metropolis of the colony. We have abundant indications that we possess large quantities of iron ore, including hematite, which has been discovered in the Ohotover district, but no attempts to utilise it have hitherto been made, and the pig-iron used in our foundries is all imported. A company has, however, been formed to work the iron-sand which, in the province of Taranaki,

forms miles of the sea beach, so that we shall probably ere long draw our supplies from that quarter.

As a slight additional confirmation of the assertion that Dunedin promises to become the manufacturing city of the colony, I may mention that even in the department of confectionery, a Dunedin maker of that luxury, which, by the way, not only colonial children, but colonial adults, seem to indulge in pretty freely, sends his wares all over New Zealand. His confectionery and biscuit-baking establishment has steadily increased till it far exceeds the most extravagant local requirements.

The low price of stock caused attention to be turned to meat preserving, and there are now several large establishments in different parts of the province turning out by the ton this wholesome and delicious article of food. The value of such meats exported from the colony in 1872, being mostly from Otago and Canterbury, was over £160,000.

The only other industries worthy of notice

are the manufacture of leather, which is exported to England to some extent, of glue, soap, and of tubs, buckets, washing-boards and such like articles, those last-mentioned being previously supplied by our American cousins, from whom we receive direct supplies of these and other Yankee notions. Ready-made boots and shoes are still largely imported, but some firms are beginning to make these necessities on a scale which will tell upon the import trade. Clay suitable for the manufacture of pottery is said to have been found; no attempt, however, has been made to take advantage of it, only the ruder kinds of brown earthenware being made. Furniture of the better sorts is all brought from Britain, but a great deal of that in every-day use by the colonists is made on the spot, chiefly from Sydney cedar or native woods. Many of these last are of great beauty, and a small trade has sprung up in the construction of fancy tables, boxes, etc., from divers of the native woods, inlaid in patterns, some of which are very artistic and pretty.

The timber trade is one which is assuming larger proportions every year, many of the native trees yielding the best of timber, notably the black and red pines, and the totara. A certain amount of prejudice existed long against colonial timber, and in some quarters does so still, but this is due mainly, I am convinced, to its being sawn up and used without being thoroughly seasoned, and to a want of paying any regard to the time of the year at which it is felled. As railway communication is pushed on, this trade will doubtless receive a great impulse. We already send timber to Australia, and, with time, the quantity exported will increase. There are vast forests still uninvaded by the hand of the sawyers, Otago having hardly trenched upon this source of national wealth.

I have stated that there is iron-ore in the province; but we have really no idea of what we possess in the way of minerals. Copper has been discovered in several places, but has not, as yet, been worked, or even thoroughly tested.

Water-worn pieces of native silver, and large quantities of cinnabar, have been picked up, but neither has been found *in situ*. The search for gold had seemingly withdrawn attention for a time from everything else; and, though the gold is as eagerly sought after as ever, other things are beginning to receive a greater share of attention.

When an Otago colonist looks back on the past decade, and sees how, in spite of the reaction after the fever of excitement and overtrading indulged in at the time of the gold discovery, the many industries which have been established and have succeeded, notwithstanding prejudice and opposition, he may with confidence hope for great results from the ensuing period of ten years. And the natural resources are such that no one with any knowledge of them can doubt but that the future wealth of the province and colony is only a question of time.

CHAPTER VI.

The Domestic Affliction.

It is hardly possible for two ladies to carry on a conversation for many minutes without touching on the subject of domestic servants, these necessary auxiliaries being a perpetual cause of grievance. They are either hopelessly useless beyond any chance of amendment, having attained years of mature womanhood without ever seeing the inside of anything better than an Irish cabin or Highland bothy; or else, if a good one be secured, she leaves in a month or two for what she thinks will be "an easier place," or perhaps to be married. Then the worst of them expects from £30 to £50 a year; £35 and £40 per annum is the current rate of

wages for housemaids and cooks in private families, and that even for the most indifferent of servants. A girl of sixteen who goes to mind a baby expects 8s. or 10s. a week. Such rates of wages enable the servants to dress as well as their mistresses, and sometimes even better, so that the drapers' shops drive a roaring trade in proportion to the population. A lady of my acquaintance, on her first arrival from England, having heard of the scarcity of servants, remarked that they must indeed be scarce, as she had observed many ladies apparently carrying out their own children—the fact being, however, that she was misled by the expensive dresses worn by the nursemaids into the error of supposing them to be the mothers of their charges. Even on calling at a house there is sometimes a difficulty in knowing whether it is a housemaid or a member of the family who opens the door for you, caps, and such like minor distinctions, which, I presume, still linger in conservative England, being utterly abolished in this land of freedom.

As a specimen of the raw material of which the colonists are expected to make servants, I shall give an instance which came under my notice the other day. A new servant arrived at her situation on the Saturday evening, and even on the Sunday morning she showed symptoms which betokened verdancy. When she was engaged, in reply to a question of her future mistress, she had stated that she could do plain cooking, so that there was no hesitation in intrusting her with a leg of mutton and a cauliflower to cook for the early dinner. After church, the family returned home, and found the table laid in a decidedly original and peculiar manner, and the lady of the house confided to her husband that she thought the new domestic had not seen much. If she had any doubts on that score they were soon set at rest, when there was placed on the table the leg of mutton and the cauliflower on the same dish, both having been roasted together in the oven, the former being burnt to a cinder, while the latter was hardly recognisable in its brown and

shrivelled condition. By way of perfecting this display of ignorance, the girl had the effrontery to come and ask if the mutton was roasted to their liking, as she could not understand that clock of theirs. Inquiry elicited, that while the mutton was cooking she had been addling her very small modicum of brains in the endeavour to ascertain the time of day by dint of consulting the aneroid barometer! And such is the sort of individual who applies for a situation as housemaid or general servant with wages at £45 a year. Another bright specimen of a cook, after a residence of a week or two in her situation, had the audacity to remonstrate with her mistress for being, as she said, "so inconsistent" (though evidently meaning inconsiderate) as to speak of giving a dinner party when she had so much work to do, and finally left her place at the end of the month because there were too many children, the "too many" being three! This example of cool impudence was quite equalled by a domestic whose mistress lived about three miles out in the country. One

Sunday morning the dog-cart ~~was sent~~ into town with such of the servants as desired to go to church, but of this opportunity the housemaid did not avail herself. In the afternoon she presented herself before the lady of the house, saying she wished to go to town in the pony carriage to see a friend. The lady replied that the pony carriage was not going anywhere that afternoon. "Then," said the servant, "I suppose *I* can have it;" and when her mistress said, "Certainly not," adding that she should have gone in the dog-cart in the morning, or that she might walk if very anxious about it, her ladyship (the housemaid) flounced out of the room with a most indignant air, and only returned to announce her intention to depart finally if she were to put up with such treatment. It may be wondered how the ladies ever tolerate such conduct for an instant. The ready reply is, they are often afraid to dismiss a servant, as they might be left for weeks without one of any sort.

A good many single women have been intro-

duced from time to time by the provincial government of this province, and the general government is now granting free passages to single women between the ages of twelve and thirty-five, but still the demand greatly exceeds the supply. Whenever a ship comes in, all the single women are engaged as servants within a few hours, and this temporarily supplies the requirements of Dunedin, but they very soon begin to get scarce again. It may be asked what comes of them all? As the best answer I can give, I shall copy a paragraph from a recent issue of the *Otago Daily Times* (11th April, 1873):—"In reporting the proceedings that took place the other day at Bannockburn, the *Cromwell Argus* says:—"The dancing that followed was kept up for three or four hours by some thirty males and two females. Struggles for the possession of the fair demoiselles were the source of fun not included in the programme."

At the last census, taken in February, 1871, there were in round numbers 36,000 males and

23,000 females in the province of Otago. This disparity is increased when it is borne in mind that these figures include children, amongst whom the sexes must be pretty equal, if, indeed, the female sex does not predominate. Amongst adults, the greatest difference is to be met with on the gold-fields. In Dunedin, and other towns on or near the sea-board, the difference is, comparatively speaking, imperceptible, thus disappointing the few old maids who emigrate with the intention of finding a husband. A friend amused me with an account of a lady fellow-passenger of hers who hardly made a secret of her motive for crossing the mighty deep, and was an authority as to the exact male population of the colony, and spoke of the necessity of dressing well so as to make a good impression on landing. She evidently expected some love-sick swain to propose through a speaking-trumpet before the vessel reached the wharf. Poor old lady! what a sad disappointment awaited her, for she still enjoys the blessings of single life, and is not now likely to find

a partner in her sorrows. Why more servants do not emigrate it is difficult to understand, unless it be that single women shrink from taking such a long voyage alone. That, however, should not stand in the way, as in the Government emigrant ships there is usually an experienced matron in charge of the female passengers, and large barracks have been erected here with extensive accommodation for the immigrants, should any delay arise in their getting situations, but in the case of single women this is very improbable.

Besides the high wages, there are many other little privileges enjoyed by colonial servants. I know of the case of a family who, on leaving Britain, with difficulty induced a faithful servant, to whom the children were all much attached, to accompany them to New Zealand. Her relatives unanimously opposed her going, and it was only on the promise that she should receive the colonial rate of wages and have a free passage home at the end of a year, if she then wished to return, that she could be in-

duced to leave her native place. Two years passed, and she gave no symptoms of a desire to leave the colony. On being reminded of the promise that she should be sent home, she said, "Ah! I could not go home to be a servant now. I'd like to go and see my mother and all my friends, but it's so different from here. I could not be a servant at home again." So she remained in the colony, and ultimately married very well indeed. Even in marrying an artizan, a servant girl is able to command more comforts and even luxuries than she would be likely to do at home, and occasionally one gets a husband who is well off, and then the Abigail is, in her own estimation at least, as good as anyone. Not very long ago, I noticed a girl whom I chanced to know had come to the colony as an assisted immigrant, sitting in full splendour, with cloak, bouquet, and fan, beside her husband in the front row of the dress circle at the Italian Opera!

CHAPTER VII.

Up the Country.

Nothing can be vaguer than the phrase, "up the country," especially as when used in Dunedin it means anywhere out of town. As the province of Otago comprises 16,000,000 acres, some idea may be formed as to the amount of information contained in such a reply to a query as to the whereabouts of any one. Notwithstanding this, it would generally be considered a sufficient answer, and the inquirer would probably have to ask for more precise information if he desired it. The phrase is, however, susceptible of a little narrower interpretation than that indicated, as it is mostly limited to the gold-field districts of the interior.

In the province of Otago, the two most striking natural features are the presence of hills and absence of trees. The former are everywhere, varying from low undulating country to snow-capped mountains; nor are there any plains so extensive as to shut them out from view. Plains there are, some such as that of the Taieri, ten miles from Dunedin, highly fertile, well cultivated, and studded with pleasant homesteads; others, such as the Maniatoto, dry and arid, with hardly an inhabitant. The Taieri plain, which is a magnificent tract of agricultural land, has long been settled, owing greatly to its proximity to Dunedin, as well as to the excellence of its soil. At one time a large part of it, which is at present under cultivation, was of a swampy nature, but is now the best of the land. Many tracts of swamp-land throughout the province have been changed into good firm ground, merely by dint of burning off the tall rank swamp-grasses and depasturing cattle in them. The sun and air being thus admitted, desiccate the moisture, and

work a marvellous change, with little help from drainage. In the district to which I have just referred, however, considerable expense has been incurred both in the cutting of drains and in the banking out of the river, which wends its sinuous course throughout the whole length of the plain.

There are also several fine valleys separating some of the mountain ranges, the most notable being those of the Mataura and Molyneux. The former, from its distance from a market, has not been much settled upon, but will doubtless come into favour when crossed by the Southern Trunk Railway now in course of formation. The latter valley is an old settled district, and the river by which it is traversed, called on the maps the Clutha, and by the people by the more euphonious name of the Molyneux, is said to discharge more water than the Nile, and sixteen times more than the Thames. It is navigable for a distance of fifty miles from its mouth.

In some parts of the province, however, there

is nothing but hills; the spurs and ridges are razor-backed, and the intervening gullies are of a similar formation. I remember asking a new chum, when amongst these hills, what he thought of the country, and his reply was that he had always previously believed that where there were hills there must be valleys, but here, he said, one hill begins from the base of another.

Along the seaboard, especially in the southern and western parts of the province, large tracts of forest are to be found, getting smaller towards the north, till they totally disappear, and not a tree is to be seen. The same treeless character is met with in the interior, and one may there travel for days in succession without ever seeing anything larger than a bush of tumatakuru (*discaria toumaton*), a straggling, prickly, almost leafless shrub, attaining sometimes a height of ten to fourteen feet, known to the colonists as "wild Irishman." This utter treelessness is the more strange as in many places evidences are abundant that the country

has, at apparently no very distant date, been thickly wooded. I have frequently seen charred logs of a large size lying on the tops of mountain ranges distant many miles from the nearest living forest. The want of wood was always a great source of complaint with the gold-fields' population in the early days of the diggings, coming, as most of them did, from well-wooded Australia. An old gin-case was then, and even now is, a thing not to be despised in many of these up-country regions. A favourite joke of the diggers of those days was that in order to get a little hot water they were obliged to set fire to the grass and run along holding their "billy" over the flames till it boiled.

The lack of trees, at least so far as purposes of fuel is concerned, is amply supplied by the quantity of lignite, or brown coal, which is found all over the province. Wherever a township has sprung up, a coal-pit has been opened, and abundance of excellent fuel supplied at a cheap rate, the Government granting leases of the coal-beds at a low rent, and binding the

lessees down not to charge more than a certain price per tonⁿ for the coal. Had it not been for this beneficent provision of nature, the treeless districts would have been almost uninhabited. I often recall the time when I had this fact thrust somewhat forcibly upon me. It was the first time I had ever camped out, and as evening was approaching we were on the outlook for a suitable camping ground, when one of the party said, "Here's plenty of wood and water; we can't find a better place than this." I looked about and could see the water in abundance, but as for the "plenty of wood" I could not descry a vestige of it. I asked where it was, and was told to wait a bit and I should see. We dismounted, and, while the tent was being pitched, I was despatched to fill the billy with water. On my return I found a fire already blazing, made with a few handfuls of small sticks no thicker than my fingers, the scattered remains of some small scrub bushes that had been killed in a grass-fire, and which I had utterly overlooked. These twigs, for

they were no better, sufficed, however, to boil our billy and fry the mutton we carried with us. One relishes a fatty chop in their fingers and a pannikin of tea in such circumstances with an amazing zest, and I enjoyed my supper as thoroughly as I ever did the same repast surrounded by all the elegancies and comforts of civilization, notwithstanding the want of plates, the only substitute for which was a slice of camp-oven bread. The tea, though so refreshing, we managed badly; we had no milk to cool it, and we had made the pannikins too hot to be pleasant. The evening was cold, and as we had to be sparing of our "firewood" for next morning's breakfast, we soon turned into the blankets. The tent was a small one and blankets few, so we all four made a kind of common bed of it, with our saddles for pillows. We spent the evening in talking, but at an early hour one by one dropped off to sleep. Of sleep there was apparently none for me: the novelty of the situation was too great. It began to rain too, and as I lay rather uncomfortably

wedged in between two of my comrades, listening to the steady fall of the rain-drops on the canvas and the heavy breathing of the sleepers, I had plenty of time to think of the uninhabitableness of the treeless regions. Towards morning I fell asleep too, but before long I awoke, feeling intensely cold—and no wonder, for I discovered that all the blankets had disappeared: one of our companions happened to be also awake, so, after groping about, we missed one of our bedfellows: he had by some means or other slipped out of the tent, which was pitched on a slight incline, and we found him lying just outside, with all the blankets most comfortably rolled round him, but still sound asleep. We had considerable difficulty in awaking him, but by dragging him uphill again we made him realise his position; the blankets were quite wet with the rain, and we had no more sleep that night, but had to wait with patience for the dawn, without even a fire to cheer us.

Owing to the want of trees, the scenery is

very monotonous in many parts of the country, the yellowish green of the tussock grass being only relieved by dark grey schist rocks. These are frequently very numerous, and, rising from the ground in all sorts of fantastic shapes and forms, somewhat vary the scene, and in a few of the narrower river gorges even lend it grandeur.

One of the most curious natural features is what is known as the terrace formation. In some parts of the country, chiefly in the upper valley of the Molyneux and its tributaries, these terraces present a remarkable appearance. They are composed of shingle and gravel, are flat on the top, and look as if the Titans had visited New Zealand and begun forming pleasure gardens. They extend for long distances in unbroken regularity, as if they had been laid off with the greatest care and precision. They are of different altitudes, and are often from one to two hundred feet in height. But none of all these makes up for the loss of the grand living, moving trees, and, after a sojourn where only the lithe yellow grass is to be seen bending

meekly to the breeze, or the dark rock standing erect in stolid defiance of the storm, the eye rejoices to behold a stately tree swaying its verdant head and tossing about its mighty arms as if wrestling with the gale.

Travelling up the country is therefore rather uninteresting, and one would never think of taking a walking tour for the sake of seeing it; riding is, in fine weather, decidedly the best means of locomotion. I think it is Ruskin who condemns even riding as a means of travelling when one wants to see the country, and says it is only when walking that all the little beauties of the scene can be appreciated. But Ruskin never was in New Zealand, where one may take a good day's ride and see nothing except the varying form of the hills and the cloud shadows fleeting along their sombre sides. I think that even he would in such a case be satisfied that the more rapid mode of transit through the clear exhilarating air was quite slow enough to permit of the contemplation of the beauties of nature.

When the traveller reaches the lake district, however, the aspect of the scene is quite changed. There the mountains rise in wilder grandeur to greater heights, till some of them reach the regions of perpetual snow. Of the best known large Otago lakes, Wakatipu and Wanaka, I prefer the latter as being the sterner and wilder, and yet more beautiful of the two; but what words could convey any idea of it? such beauty must indeed be seen to be felt, and once felt can never be forgotten. New Zealand scenery is already attracting tourists from Australia, and possibly, ere long, when the English grand route is round the world, will draw them from distant England also.

Near Wanaka lake lies another smaller one of exceeding beauty, with a pleasant-sounding native name—the Hawea. It is not so interesting at its lower extremity, but about half-way up the scenery is sublime. Passing along the eastern bank, the wayfarer comes upon a pretty little bay with a shingle beach, while a short distance from the shore lies a rocky islet

partially covered with a few contorted stunted trees, such as might delight the eye of Doré. Across the lake, a narrow gap appears in the chain of hills which form its western barrier. The hills to the right of this are rugged and wooded to their summits, the dark birch (mostly *fagus menziesii*, though the forest is fringed with *fagus solandri*, of which tree the small detached clumps are mostly composed) trees apparently hanging on precipitous cliffs, save here and there where a naked rocky peak rises from the surrounding wood. The hills to the left of the gap are more rounded, devoid of trees, and look warm and bright in the noon-day sun. Through the breach the dark rough hills of the Wanaka shew themselves, while over all there rises against a sky of the deepest blue the snow-clad peak of Mount Aspiring, resembling somewhat the tooth of a giant saw, and recalling a little the summit of the Matterhorn. The whole forms one of the most glorious pictures I ever beheld. The only life visible, a pair of crested frebe (*podiceps cristatus*) silently

disporting themselves between the island and the shore, rather adds to than detracts from the peaceful stillness of the scene.

The birch forest just mentioned extends up to the head of the lake, and greatly enhances its beauty ; while up the valley of the Hunter river, which feeds the Hawea, small clumps of these trees are frequent. There are numerous waterfalls of greater or lesser height in this neighbourhood, possessing the charm of not being mentioned in any guide-book—indeed, those who have had the good fortune to behold them may as yet be numbered by tens—and save Mount Succession, which leaps down the mountain side in thirteen successive falls, they are nameless.

The precipitous nature of the mountains may be imagined from the following circumstance:—A pair of horses, grazing on the shores of the lake, were by a fright driven up the mountain ; the rein-holder endeavoured to recover them, and after a considerable search discovered the remains of one which had broken its neck

among the rocks, but the other could not be found; many months afterwards, when all hope of ever seeing the horse again had been abandoned, a shepherd, while out mustering, descried the errant steed on a small plateau surrounded by rocks. The unfortunate animal had reached this spot, and had been unable to get down; rather than attempt the descent, it had preferred to undergo great privations. From the appearance of the place, it had evidently been there all the time, and must have suffered greatly from want of water, besides scanty food, as there was no pool or stream there, and all the water it can have had to quench its thirst must have been the dew and the rain caught in the hollows of the rocks. The poor brute was rescued from his unpleasant situation, and, on reaching the lower ground, it made at once for the lake, and indulged in such a draught as it had never before enjoyed. I have been assured by shepherds in this locality that, when out mustering, they frequently have to pass along spurs and ridges so sharp that they have to

proceed with one leg on either side, like a slater on the roof of a house. Sheep are sometimes got in with a two year's fleece, it being almost impossible to muster portions of these rough regions even once a year.

Among the green mountain parrots, or keas (*nestor notabilis*), inhabiting the Wanaka and Hawea hills, a most singular taste has developed itself within the last few years. On a station on the former lake, these birds had been known to peck at and tear sheepskins when left drying in the sun, but not contented with these, they betook themselves to performing the same operation upon the skins which were still on the backs of the living sheep. A gentleman, in speaking of this, said that when he first heard of it he was incredulous, having known the birds for years, and seen nothing to indicate such tastes; but soon afterwards he was convinced of its truth, for he saw several of them attacking a sheep on his own run, which they quickly tore in such a manner as to cause its death. He added that he did not think the keas eat any of the

carcase of the sheep, but that it was done merely for the sake of the amusement they seemed to derive in hunting their helpless victim. The amusement, being rather an expensive one for the flockowners, has cost many a kea his life, and a ruthless warfare is now waged against them.

Here, too, the pretty little native quail (*turnix novae zealandiae*) lingered long, but it has at last disappeared from these regions. The sudden extermination of this bird, once so plentiful throughout the province, has often been the subject of conjecture, the favourite theory always being that they have been driven away by the grass-fires and the sheep. But on a run on the Hawea which was lightly stocked, where there had been little or no burning, and where they had always abounded to such an extent that the cats would bring in several in a day, they about four years ago totally disappeared. Being birds of very limited powers of flight, they can hardly have emigrated, and owe their extinction to some hitherto unexplained cause.

The kirvi (*apteryx owenii*) and kakapo (*strigops habroptilus*) are to be found in the bush on some of the streams flowing into the Wanaka. The latter is the strange nocturnal parrot of New Zealand, which, although it possesses large wings, seldom uses them. It is not, as is generally supposed, wholly incapable of flight. The kakapo will, for instance, fly across a stream of some little width, but, starting probably from a high bank, will gain the other side on the lowest possible level, and, satisfied with the effort, climb the bank rather than essay any further exploits on the wing.

The kirvi is one of the greatest natural curiosities of New Zealand, and any ardent naturalist who visits these remote wilds in the hope of securing a specimen or two will in all likelihood meet with difficulties enough to damp the ardour of the most enthusiastic. The bird is also nocturnal, and is usually captured by dogs, but the preliminary difficulty is to get a dog who will do so. This having been got over, the collector starts for his hunt-

ing-ground, which is reached about dusk. The night is probably cold, but he takes his stand and listens patiently, while the dog searches for the quarry. Soon he hears the dog in pursuit of something, and if he wants a good skin he must at once start off in pursuit also. Dashing through the fens and bushes, dripping with dew or misty rain, regardless of bush lawyers or other obstacles, he comes up with the dog to find the kirvi captured, but minus most of its feathers. Like those of the handsome native wood-pigeon, the feathers of this variety of the kirvi are most easily displaced, and the naturalist will have to run a dozen or more races, such as I have described, in order to obtain one or two birds which are worth carrying away—together, kirvi-hunting is far from exciting sport.

The sportsman may get a very good day's duck-shooting in different parts of the country. The grey duck (*anas superciliosa*) and teal (*anas gracilis*) being plentiful in places, while the noble paradise ducks (*casarca variegata*)

are very abundant among the stubble in some parts of the interior. In the swamps there is also the pukaki (*porphyris milanotus*), or swamp-turkey, a bird which rises well and affords good sport.

As might be expected in a country where riding is a necessary accomplishment, horse racing is a favourite amusement. Every township of any size has its annual meeting, and nearly every one of them has a piece of adjacent land reserved by the Government for a race-course. The largest meeting is held in Dunedin, and annually attracts many visitors from up the country.

CHAPTER VIII.

Life in the Gold-fields.

THE inhabitants of a gold-field are divisible into two great classes—the mining population proper, and their camp-followers so to speak, comprising those who make their livings or fortunes by supplying the wants of the miner. The majority of this parasitic class are those who furnish the digger's requirements for his sustenance or amusement, but it includes a section of the community known as the “paper-collared swells,” who are the government officials, medical men, bank employees *et hoc genus omne*.

In the early days of any gold-field, or at the “first of the rush,” as it is called, all is

bustle and excitement—men arriving from all quarters, storekeepers taking up business locations, rumours of good finds flying about, and every one bent on making money. Gold, gold, gold, nothing else is thought of: the vaguest rumour of a good prospect having been obtained causing crowds of men to start off thither, eager to peg out a claim as near to that of the prospectors as possible.

Sometimes a false report will be circulated, and the diggers sent on a fool's errand, but the originator of the canard must use great caution, for if he be discovered he would probably be lynched by the disappointed mob. A man told me that in one rush he was the victim of such a hoax, but as he merely ran three or four miles in a particular direction, seeing other men hurrying that way, without having the least idea whither he was going, he had after all not much to complain of, for all suddenly found themselves at fault, and each seemed inclined to attribute all the blame to the others. Men have even been

sent long distances over rough and hazardous country by such false rumours. Then, when the report is true, a number are often disappointed in their claims, and, because they are not making what they consider a "pile," they give them up, and are ready to rush off somewhere else at a moment's notice. In many instances they are frequently glad to return to their discarded claims when the excitement has died away. At such times everything is at famine prices. This is attributable to two causes, one being that when a rush takes place that part of the country is usually quite unprepared to receive such an accession to its population, and the other is, from the want of roads, (which no one cares to make, every one being eager to dig for gold), the carriage of goods to the scene of operations is exorbitantly high. At the first of the rush to Gabriel's gully in Otago, the rate of land-carriage of stores, for a distance of about sixty miles, was as high as £100 per ton. The following items will afford some idea of the cost of living on "a new

rush :”—Flour 2s. per lb, potatoes 2s. per lb, a 4lb loaf £1, a bottle of gin £1, and so on in proportion for everything else.

Money at such times is spent as if there were no end to it. It is a matter of difficulty to get a man to do anything for you, and no matter how slight the service, the remuneration demanded would never be less than £1. Stories of the extravagance and recklessness of lucky diggers are abundant, but they have always a sameness about them. Making a sandwich of a £20 note and eating it, washing in a bucket of champagne, or setting up bottles of that liquor for skittle-pins; and champagne then meant money, for even till quite recently the most indifferent wine which passed by that name was £1 a bottle. A few minutes conversation with any one who was a “host” in the times I speak of, will evoke many such tales of extravagant folly. “Ah! these were the good old times,” said my landlady once, adding that she had seen the men with their pockets full of gold come into the hotel, and, times without number,

“shout for all hands” (that is, treat every one in the house to drink), insisting on paying for even the cats and dogs, and this would probably be continued till the lucky digger was “cleaned out.”

In this province such a state of affairs has long since passed away, and gold-mining has settled down into a steady permanent industry. The mining population have, it is true, perhaps a little larger share of love of change than most colonists, but the numbers on our gold-fields have not fluctuated much for many years back.

The miners, or diggers as they are usually termed, are a hardy class of people who mostly have followed mining as an avocation for many years. In the early days, men of all ranks and grades, professions and callings, might have been found in the digger's garb, but now-a-days the pursuit of gold-mining does not number amongst its followers many men above the rank of artizans. Numbers of them are highly intelligent, and have seen a great deal of the world, and are remarkable for their sturdy in-

dependent air and manner. "I've called no man master for twelve years," I have heard a fellow say in talking of himself, and, from the decided way in which he said it, I am sure he never would again.

Many of them have travelled much, either as seamen or in search of the precious metal, and consequently have various experiences to relate on all sorts of subjects. Life in a small diggings township would be most insufferably irksome, especially to the poor civilian or banker, were it not occasionally enlivened by listening to some good digger's yarns. Some of these are sad ones, for many risks are run and many hardships suffered; and both in prospecting in a new country, and in following the every-day employment of the miner, one sometimes meets an untimely fate.

In Otago the principle kind of mining is ground-sluicing, the *modus operandi* being very similar to one method of working for tin in Cornwall, there called "streaming." When there is a large deposit of aluvium, with a little

gold all through it, or perhaps containing different strata of auriferous soil, too poor to pay for driving tunnels in, ground-sluicing is the only way to make it pay. Water-races are brought on to the ground often from great distances: the races being taken along the sides of the hills, across deep gullies, and round rocky promontories and cliffs for many miles, so as to reach, at a sufficient level, the ground to be worked. The only engineering instrument used is a large wooden triangle, or rather a figure like a wide spread letter A, with one leg usually a little shorter than the other, and a weight hung from the apex, which indicates, with the aid of a few marks on the cross-bar, the number of feet to the mile of fall that is being given to "the race." Great expense is sometimes incurred in carrying these races across gullies and rivers, in wooden boxes, or canvas hose called fluming. When at length the water reaches the auriferous ground, the earth is gradually washed away through a narrow channel, or tail-race, in mining phrase-

ology, prepared for the purpose, and paved with stones.

This process is carried on for months, the tail-race being prolonged into the space from which the ground has been washed away, until a larger hole or "paddock" is taken out, with precipitous sides, varying in height from a couple of feet to two hundred or more, according as the ground is deep or shallow. Everything is rushed into the tail-race by the water, the large stones being lifted out by hand and piled up on the sides, while the smaller ones are sometimes taken out with a long handled long pronged sluice-fork, while the earth and gravel are carried away by the stream. When the "paddock" has been taken out, the water is turned off, and everything that is left in the tail-race carefully removed, to be washed again in a sluice-box or cradle, and the desired result is then obtained. The gold, even when fine, from its great weight finds its way down among the interstices of the rough paving of the tail-race, and is thus saved. This kind

of working is often dangerous, and numerous miners have lost their lives while engaged in it, as the ground is sometimes treacherous and comes away suddenly with little warning in large blocks ; at others it is brought down with difficulty, and even gunpowder has to be resorted to.

I knew of one poor fellow who was drowned in a horrible manner while engaged in this kind of mining. He was at work during the night-shift looking after the water ; the tail-race was a deep one, and while in it a fall of earth came down from the side, knocked him over, and buried the lower part of his body, leaving the upper part free. He fell with his head up "the race," and there he lay with half a ton of earth holding him down, and the muddy water rising upon him. Several cries and noises were heard that night in the township from the direction of the workings, but as they were supposed to come from the hut of a miner who was known to be "on the spree," no attention was paid to them, and in the morning, when

the people went to work, they found their poor mate drowned in the tail-race.

In this province quartz crushing for gold is as yet in its infancy, but it gives abundant promise for the future, notwithstanding that the interest of the speculating public has been somewhat shaken in "reefing," from many bubble companies having been started and some others which were *bond-fide* proving "duffers," or being ruined by mismanagement. The number of paying quartz concerns is gradually increasing, and, without doubt will continue to do so every year, for as capital is amassed in other pursuits it of necessity seeks outlets for itself.

One of the most successful quartz mines in the province is in private hands, and its fortunate proprietors are rapidly making fortunes. Three miners took up the case, and after prospecting it for some time and spending all their money over it, were so satisfied with the prospects that they induced a person with money at command to join them, and they erected a

Barry's mine
quartz battery, which was to be partly paid for out of the results. Before this was accomplished the trio were very hard-up. The battery was erected and put in operation with most satisfactory results. One of the original owners a few months after, in riding home one night in the dark was thrown from his horse and killed. His fourth share in the mine was sold and fetched £2,000, notwithstanding there were so few people in the neighbourhood able to bid.

In a diggings-town one sometimes meets with strange characters—ignorant people with large sums of money at their command such as would have surpassed even the wildest dreams of their ancestors, and the mistakes made by some of these are now and then not a little amusing. The commonest source of error is the use, or rather misuse, of words, and in this they beat Mrs. Malaprop hollow. I once heard an old "lady" confidentially inform a friend that she had made up her mind to get an "antimonic dress." Further inquiry elicited that it was a

moiré antique that she meditated purchasing. Another person thought that the mayor of their town should wear "a scarlet robe lined with vermin," and could not see the joke when those around laughed. An enterprising German publican, having obtained for a public supper something which he was pleased to term *putés-de-fois-gras*, the individual seated opposite this rare dish insisted on calling them "potted photographs." At a similar entertainment, a guest loudly lauded the "blue munge" (*blanc mange*). Besides such *outré* expressions, there are many words and phrases current peculiar to the mining population. Of these, one of the most inexplicable is the diggers' good-bye, as in place of using that good old Saxon word at parting, they always say "so-long." There are, of course, many what may be called technical terms in connection with the pursuit of mining, but besides these there are words used in general conversation which would not be found in an English dictionary. Such, for example, as "duffer" or "shiser," anything that is useless ;

"flash," an adjective, differing in meaning a little according to what it is applied to, but which may be interpreted generally by stylish. Some words do not betoken a very exalted origin, as "~~scrag~~," the name given to a digger's blankets and personal baggage, usually carried in a long bundle round the body, which is just the thieves' cant for booty. To treat a person to drink is called "shouting:" the origin of the word is obvious.

Balls are great institutions at the diggings. They are got up by the hotel-keepers, who have a keen eye to business; they give a general invitation to the public, usually through the local press, but I have received an invitation on pink paper to such an assembly. The host gives the room, lights, and a supper, and the guests supply themselves and their partners with such liquid refreshments as they may desire, and as it is considered a point of honour for every one to spend something "for the good of the house," the publican drives a roaring trade. I have known a hotel-keeper, in not by any means

particularly bright times, take over £60 in one night across his bar—being close upon £1 per head for each guest. The miners are fond of dancing, and will even, when partners of the fair sex cannot be obtained, dance with one another; this amusement they style “stag-dancing.” The dresses at a diggers’ ball, as may be imagined, are motley in the extreme. The ladies—every woman is a lady—are elaborately got up in evening costume, even to orthodox white kid gloves; while the men often make little or no alteration in their toilet. I have seen in a ball-room men with waistcoats of every conceivable kind, from a “flash” white one with gilt buttons to none at all, including, in the intermediate stages, one of showy calf-skin.

One of the greatest social evils in the gold-fields is the system of “shouting.” Two friends cannot meet without one saying, “Come and have a drink.” A business transaction is seldom concluded without the purchaser asking, “Are you going to shout?” But

this, like many another bad habit resulting from the unsettled state of affairs in the early days of the diggings, is, I am glad to say, lessening.

CHAPTER IX.

Diggers' Barns.

SITTING at dinner at the public table of a hotel on the gold-fields, the conversation happened to turn on the different articles of food, and nearly every one seemed to have partaken of some unusual dish, betokening diverse experiences. This one had eaten camel's flesh, that one monkey's, and another had made a meal off bear-meat in California.

"Well," said an old fellow, "you may talk about these things as much as you like, but I've seen sights of scenes and scenes of sights that would make your hair stand on end like porcupines' quills; and talk about eating, I've

seen a fellow eat what I'd have been sore put to it afore I'd ha' touched. We were down at the New Highbrides (Hebrides), and some of us went ashore. Me and another chap went up the beach to where we saw a lot of natives, and I'm blowed if the black devils weren't sitting round a fire having a feast of human flesh, and there were rows of human heads hanging round like sheep in a butcher's shop. We thought it best to be civil, and gave the niggers the time o' day, and one of 'em takes an arm up from the fire and offers it to us. If there had not been such a confounded lot of them, I'd have knocked the black rascal down for insulting me, and was turning away when my mate said, 'I am blessed if I don't try it, Bill,' and he lifted the arm and took a bite. Didn't they make it hot for Jack when I told the rest of the crew: we called him Cannibal Jack ever after."

I was surprised that a shout of laughter should greet this horrible tale, but I learned that the narrator was so addicted to relating

extraordinary stories, drawn from his own imagination and other sources, that none of his hearers ever credited a word. My own subsequent experience of the old man amply confirmed this, as he one day had the audacity to tell me the story of Androcles and the Lion, and assure me that the incident had occurred when he was in Moulmain, and that he had seen the man and the lion in the street many a time!

On the present occasion his story had the effect of turning the conversation from gastronomy to the coloured races with whom those present had come in contact. Various experiences of Red Indians, Chinese, and Australian aborigines were related, and generally to their disadvantage, especially in the case of the latter. However, the Australian black found a champion in a mild-looking middle-aged man, who said he had long lived amongst them, and that they were a greatly maligned people, and much more intelligent than they generally got credit for. He allowed that they were reticent about

many things, and would not converse freely with every one. They had, he continued, many strange legends. One he told us as to how the emu lost his wings, is amusing.

The emu was not originally an inhabitant of the earth, but came hither from the clouds of Magellan, which he had previously inhabited. Being then possessed of very large wings, he navigated the space lying between Australia and his distant land without much difficulty, but on his arrival in this lower sphere his troubles began. The sight of his vast proportions aroused a universal feeling of terror in the breasts of the feathered Australians, and, when this began to abate, there was mingled with their fear some envy that this clumsy bird should eclipse all their puny attempts at flight. This impression was everywhere prevalent, when the emu one day, in a spirit of friendliness, consulted a native companion as to the possibility of his being able to catch some of the fish which he saw swimming in the adjacent stream. "Nothing can be easier," replied the

native companion; "you have only to put your head under the water, and watch till you see a fish come near, and then you can easily catch it." The emu was simple enough to adopt the suggestion, but no sooner had he put his head under the water than the native companion, seizing the opportunity, leaped on his neck, and from this safe position assailed the much-envied wings, and succeeded in twisting them off. So soon as this feat was accomplished, the laughing jackass, struck with the comicality of the emu's appearance when shorn of his wings, burst for the first time into a hearty laugh, which accomplishment both he and his descendants still keep up. The emu was disconsolate for some time, but he was soothed at last by a visit from his mate, who, wearied by his absence, came down in search of him. The faithful bird was overwhelmingly grieved at the sad condition of her spouse, but when she heard the whole story she was stirred with a desire for revenge. Cheering him, she left him for a time, but again returned,

bearing with her a supply of fire—an element hitherto unknown on the earth. The pair then set to work, and made a large fire, which soon attracted the attention of the native companions. So soon as these birds arrived on the scene, the emus asked what this strange thing was, and suggested that there must be something valuable in it. “If that be so,” said the native companions, “we had better see at once, or these silly monsters will get it,” and they with one accord thrust their heads into the flames. They did not lose much time in withdrawing them again, but not before they had lost every feather from their heads and necks, and to the present day they bear the traces of that awful burning. In order not to shame her mate, the perfect emu now tore off her own wings and shared his banishment; and, being thorough Darwinians, their progeny inherited their fate.

“Humph!” said a digger, gruffly, “I can’t stand black fellows any way, and I don’t see how such stupid nonsense as that makes them

any better." "Perhaps not," responded the narrator of the fable, "but as I owe my life to their kindness, I must confess I have rather a soft side to them. I lost myself in the bush, on the Sydney side, once, and after I had wandered about for four days, with nothing to drink and only a 'possum to eat, that my dog caught the first day, I came across a camp of blacks, and they gave me both food and drink, which, I can tell you, I was glad to get."

"Oh! I don't call that anything; and as for saving your life, I have had many as near a squeak for it as that," remarked the first speaker, surlily.

"Tell us some of them," I said, which proposition he seemed inclined at first to pooh-pooh, but, rising from the table, he drew his chair towards the fire and said, "Well, then, I'll tell you the first fright I got. I think I remember it best, from its being the first. We were working a first-rate claim, with about 100 feet sinking, and were doing very well. We had worked out the greater part of the grounds,

and had sunk a couple of shafts in the claim, and had not used a stick of timber in either, for it was capital standing ground. One day one of my mates and I, the only ones below, were going up to dinner. Just as I put my foot in the rope, I remembered I had left my pipe in a hole near where I was working, and I set off along the drive to get it, and left my mate to go up first. Before I had got the length of my pipe I heard a loud noise, and, looking round, I saw that the shaft had caved in, and that the stuff must have carried the other fellow down with it. My first thought was that it was a good job that I had not gone up first, and then I thought of poor Joe, that was my mate. I went forward, but could see nothing of him ; there was evidently tons of stuff on the top of him. I saw it was well that I was so far from the bottom of the shaft, for if I had been standing in the beginning of the drive, even in a safe enough position from anything falling down, I should certainly have been killed or badly hurt by the earth and stones which had been jammed

into the drive for a considerable distance. I saw and thought of all this in less than half the time I have taken to tell you, and then I thought, how was I to get out. 'Great heaven!' I exclaimed, 'am I spared a sudden death to die a lingering one from suffocation or hunger?'

"There was the other shaft, it was true, but then it had not been used for a long time, and for some months back we had been building the tunnel leading to it up with the large stones that we did not send to the top. I began to pull down this thick wall of heavy stones. I had a feeling that it was little use, but I could not settle down to die quietly. I worked as I never did before, and the blood began to come from the points of my fingers, and, to make matters worse, my candle soon burned itself out. However, I worked on in the dark for some time longer, and was like to drop exhausted, when I thought I saw a faint ray of light, which gave me fresh strength, and I soon after made my way into the bottom of the other shaft. I sat down for a while to recover my

breath, but then I felt that I must get up before the excitement went off, or I might not have strength left to climb. I 'shinned'* up the shaft with difficulty, and reached the surface in safety. I staggered towards a mob of fellows I saw standing round the fallen-in shaft, and I heard one of them say, 'It's no use sinking, for long before we could get down he would be dead, if not that already—which it's no doubt Joe is—and you would take as long to get in by the old shaft, on account of the stones being built up there.' I was wild to hear them speak like that, and said, 'You're a set of cowards to leave a man to die in that style.' Man! they all looked as if they had been shot, and would hardly believe me when I told how I had got out. It does not seem much to tell, I daresay, but it was a pretty near go for me, I can tell you." I expressed my surprise that he should make so light of it, for, I remarked, I

* The shafts in such claims are so narrow that a man can go up and down by putting his feet in notches made in either side. This mode, which is mostly used in shallow ground, is called "shinning."

could imagine nothing more dreadful than to be buried alive in such a manner.

"It must have been a pretty awkward fix," another fellow said, "and I know something of what it must have been, tho' I never was buried alive in the ground. I was over in Campbell's gully," he continued, "the time so many were lost in the snow, and I was caught like the rest. The country was new to us, and we did not look for anything of the sort, and were quite unprepared for it. When the snow-storm came on I was in my hut, which stood about half-a-mile up the gully from the store. After I had my supper, I looked out and put a tin dish on the top of my chimney, to keep the snow from coming down; and though I saw it was going to be a wild night, I did not think anything of it, and turned in between the blankets to read one or two old English papers I had borrowed. I lay and read till I was tired, and then, blowing out the candle, fell asleep without giving more than a passing thought to the storm. I have often thought

since it was well for me that I did so, for if I had not, I might have got frightened at the snow and tried to make my way down to the store, and that was how so many of the poor fellows must have been lost, in attempting to leave their huts in the darkness.

“When I woke up next morning, I tried to open the door to get some sticks to cook my breakfast, but found I could not; it was blocked up with snow. I opened the shutter of the hole I had for a window, and saw that it was still snowing. I did not know what to do, and, cheering myself with the thought that it would soon stop, I breakfasted on what scraps of cooked meat I had left. I consoled myself as best I could with my papers, but they did not prevent me from turning frequently to the bole-hole each time to find it snowing, still snowing. I began to get alarmed, but was afraid to attempt to make my way out, for I thought I would be sure to be smothered in such a depth of snow. The succeeding night I passed very differently from the previous

one, for I lay thinking of my position, which I now knew to be a serious one. In the morning I again looked out, but the snow was now piled above my window. I could see nothing. I had improvidently eaten largely the previous day, with a view to keeping out the cold, and had not a day's provisions left, so that the fearful alternative presented itself of dying there of starvation or forcing my way out, and probably perishing in the snow.

"I resolved to attempt the latter, and breaking down the door, began to dig at the snow, but as the side of the hut in which was the door, looked from the wind, the snow was deepest there, and after digging for some time with apparently no other result than the filling up of my hut, I gave it up in despair. A new fear took hold of me from the depth of snow on the hut—no light gained admittance anywhere, and I thought, what if such a weight of snow causes the whole to collapse? I lay down on my stretcher thinking I would have another pipe, for I had plenty of tobacco and

matches, and then go at the digging again, but, strange to say, I fell asleep. I don't know how long I may have slept, for since the light was shut out I could not judge of how time passed. When I awoke I was about to recommence the digging, when I thought it would be better to try the chimney. Accordingly, I scrambled up, and pushing the tin dish with my head, I was thankful to feel I could move it. I pushed and struggled, and succeeded in forcing it through the snow to the surface, and in a moment more I was free.

"The storm had ceased, and it was fine overhead, but how the aspect of everything was changed: there was nothing visible that I could recognise. I started in search of the store, and more by chance than anything else took a pretty straight line for it. It had luckily begun to freeze, and the snow to some extent sustained me, but I often broke through the crust, and the difficulty I had in getting over that half-mile between my hut and the store was worse than anything I ever went through. The store,

standing in an exposed situation, was pretty free from snow, and when I at length reached it I found over a dozen men there all storm-stayed.

“The store-keeper, who never kept a very large quantity of provisions, had allowed his stock to run low; and the packer, who had been almost hourly expected, did not get in before the storm came on. When I reached the place nothing was left but some oatmeal, a few boxes of sardines, and a single bottle of gin. A nip of the spirits revived me a bit after my recent exertions, and I was just in time to dissuade the boys from attempting to cross the range that day. Next night it again froze hard, and in the morning the resolution was come to, to make an effort to get out of the gully. There were sixteen of us started, and we all kept together at first; but differences of opinion arose as to the best way to take, and we split up into several small parties. There was, of course, no sign of the track, and the party of four, of which I found

myself one, took as straight a line as possible to the crest of the range. I can tell you we had a tough job of it toiling up the mountain-side on the snow, but at last we reached the top, and after a short spell commenced the descent, which we found almost worse than the ascent had been, as the sun had partially melted the surface of the snow; but we all struggled on for a time, when one fellow gave in and refused to go farther; nothing could induce him to move, and as we had enough to do for ourselves, we could not carry him. Night was coming on, and there was nothing for it but to leave him. We continued the descent, and got safely down to the Molyneux valley, just at the darkening and as the snow began to fall again. Besides the poor fellow who gave in, there were other two, who just after the start had separated themselves from the main body, and then a fourth, who all left their bones on the mountain."

"You must have had a bad time of it," said another of the diggers; "for my part, I never

was bothered with the snow in this country, for I never went high enough, but I had plenty of that and cold in my young days to last a lifetime. I went on a whaling cruise to the north pole, or some place not far off it I am sure. We were frozen in, and I have always kept out of the reach of cold weather such as you speak of since then. Talking of that time reminds me of a scrape I got into with the skipper, that ended in my leaving the ship. Our captain had a very long rifle, and was a great hand at shooting; he often knocked over the polar bears that used to come and prowl round the ship. One day one of the brutes that had been making towards the ship suddenly veered off on the other tack. The skipper had been waiting with his rifle resting on the bulwarks to get a shot, but when he saw the bear clearing out, he called me and told me to come with him, as he was not going to lose a shot in that style.

“We descended from the ship and made for the bear, which saw us coming, and, facing round, came to a halt. When we got within range,

the captain made use of my shoulder as a rest for his rifle. On our stopping, the animal began to advance, and thinking he was getting too close to be pleasant, I turned and called, 'Fire, captain, or I won't stand!' At the same moment the skipper fired, but my movement having disconcerted his aim, he missed his mark. I did not, however, wait to see the result, but bolted towards the ship, and only stopped when I had left the skipper well in the rear. 'When I looked round again, I saw the captain following me, trailing and loading his rifle, and the bear still at a safe distance. Feeling rather ashamed of myself, I waited till he came up, and said, 'I'll stand like a rock this time.' The skipper took aim again, and I, to redeem my character, never moved, though he allowed a second or two to elapse before he fired. His aim was a good one, for he struck bruin in the head and tumbled him over; but so long as I remained in the ship he never forgave my bolting."

"Well! that be hanged for a yarn," was the

critique which escaped from one of the auditors. "No," said another, "I'm certain it's true: it was so like Joe to run away." With a laugh at Joe's expense, they by mutual consent adjourned to that almost invariable adjunct of a diggings' hotel—the billiard-room.

CHAPTER X.

Up the Shotover.

WHILE living on the lower diggings of the province of Otago, I had often listened to tales of the roughness and wildness of the country farther in the interior, and if anything bad in that way was spoken of, some one present was sure to remark that it was nothing to what was to be seen up the "Shotover." A favourable opportunity presenting itself, whereby I was enabled, if I chose, to visit this famous district, I resolved not to lose the chance. Up before daylight next morning, I made my way to Cobb & Co.'s coach-office, and found the northern coach already at the door; I was fortunately in time to find one of the two seats

on the box disengaged, to which I immediately scrambled. Our Yankee driver's cheery cry of "all aboard" soon resounded through the morning air, and in a few moments more we were off at a pace which made the coach rock again on its leathern springs, while the clatter of the hoofs of the team of six greys made the empty streets resound, doubtless to the annoyance of many a sleeper.

We had a three days' drive before us ere Queenstown, the starting point for the Shot-over, would be reached. The first day passed without incident, and darkness had descended before we reached the roadside hostelry, where we hoped to pass the night. Rather tired with our day's jolting, we were looking out for the lights a little anxiously, notwithstanding the somewhat repellant name of "Pig-root," in which the establishment gloried, when the coachman gave us a bit of information he had learned a stage or two back, but up to this time had kept to himself, to the effect that the landlord of the Pig-root had been sold out by some

remorseless execution creditor a couple of days before, and that not a stick of furniture had been left in the place. This was serious, as there was not another habitation within ten miles, and we were all both tired and hungry.

We soon arrived at the ill-starred hotel, and found the report only too true. The landlord had gone off to the nearest township to endeavour to get his establishment replenished, and left an old man to take charge of the empty house and the only surviving bottle of grog. The old fellow had evidently been most assiduous in his attentions to the latter, as the contents of the bottle, like the landlord's furniture, had disappeared; and he took occasion to inform us that, as he had nothing to eat all day, he could hardly stand!

The passengers of the coach which had stopped there the previous night had made merry over their troubles, and, having a violin, got up a dance in the large empty room, and so passed the night. But there were three obstructions to our adopting such a course—first,

unwillingness; second, want of music; and third, want of lights. We held a council of war, and apparently there was nothing to be done but to pass the night in trying to sleep on the bare floor. We had with some growling come to the sage conclusion that there was no help for it, when a happy thought struck the coachman. The moon would be up in a couple of hours, why not proceed with our journey by moonlight? The stage was a rough one, it was true, but better move along slowly than stick supperless here all night. His proposition was immediately carried by acclamation, and we all began to get quite jolly again.

The summons, "all aboard," was not long in being obeyed, and away we went, rather more quietly than our start in the morning, but every one seemed disposed to make the best of it. Joke and story, story and joke followed in quick succession. My fellow-occupant of the box, a jolly Irish Catholic priest, struck up a song, and the coachman joined in with a good second, and had it not been that we

were inwardly reminded that we had eaten nothing since a very early dinner, we should have been as merry as crickets. As it was, we were not sorry when we heard the distant bark of a dog announcing some habitation near, and soon afterwards we pulled up at the door of another roadside hotel, which looked nearly as deserted as the one we had left. However, the unwonted sound of coach-wheels at that hour of the night—or rather morning, for it was long past midnight—soon evoked numerous signs of life. There was a universal clamour for something to eat, and when we sat down we certainly “astonished the victuals.”

We made up for our late travelling by a late start next day, and after two uneventful days arrived at Queenstown, thinking we had had enough of coaching to serve for some time.

After my three days' jolting, I was not up with the lark next morning, but was astir soon enough to take a stroll to the short wharf at the end of the principal street—for Queenstown, though an inland town, is situated on the shores

of a large lake (Wakatipu), some thirty miles long by six or eight broad. This wharf, which is only a few yards in length, extends from the shore into water of a sufficient depth to float the "Great Eastern." On my return to breakfast I remarked this peculiarity, and learned that round the whole lake, sometimes broader, sometimes narrower, a terrace ran, which dropped away suddenly into very deep water. A few weeks before, one of the small steamers which ply upon the lake had been taking in a supply of firewood from a cart: the steamer was lying in the deep water, and the cart was backed into the shallow water to discharge its load more conveniently. By some mischance the wheels got over the edge of the terrace, and that being too steep to allow of the horse holding the cart, it went down into the depths, dragging the horse after it, and neither was ever seen again.

In the afternoon I sought out a miner who, I was informed, intended to start for the Shotover next morning, and arranged to accompany him. We were up betimes, and, saddling our horses,

wended our way up the road at the back of the town. As soon as I reached the summit of the terrace, I drew rein and looked back to admire the scene. Queenstown lay nestling in its little hollow at our feet, bathed in the warm light of the morning sun. The air, rendered visible by a slight bluish haze betokening heat, was streaked in one or two places with a thin column of smoke rising straight from some early fire. The water was still and calm, and of the deepest blue in the bay, while in the lake beyond a gentle breeze was apparently playing, for its surface quivered and sparkled as if studded with diamonds. The picture was enclosed on all sides by lofty mountains, those across the lake rising in massive rounded grandeur against the blue and cloudless sky; those on the right rising abruptly, yet with varying slope, from the narrow belt of white shingle which skirted the lake, to steep and rocky summits, the monotonous yellowish-green of the tussock-grass broken here and there by the dark foliage of a stray birch (*fagus solandri*)

or two, while on a terrace-like ledge just over the town a patch of emerald hue indicated cultivation.

On the left, stretching away to the south till lost in haze, the "Remarkable" mountains displayed their many points and pinnacles, most of them still thickly covered with snow, from which the dark rocks and precipices stood out in bold relief. The scene was grand, yet withal, peaceful; not a sound to be heard save the occasional distant bleating of a sheep, which died away only to leave the stillness greater than before. No sign of life was visible, except where a little spotted lizard was basking on a rock close at hand. But I was disturbed in the enjoyment of the landscape by a reminder that we had better push on while the cool of the morning lasted, so bidding good-bye to Queens-town, I put spurs to my horse and followed my guide at a canter. We proceeded at a brisk pace through a small but picturesque pass till we reached the Shotover river. It did not now bear many traces of its reputed wildness, and

my pleasurable feelings, arising from the beautiful scenery and the exhilarating morning air, were mingled with a shade of disappointment at my first sight of the famed river.

The aspect of the river, however, quickly changed as we neared Arthur's Point, where it rushes furiously through a narrow chasm with precipitous sides. Our track led us to a small bridge over this chasm, wide enough only to admit of foot passengers and horses. It looked unsafely rude and primitive in its structure, and I felt that had I been alone I should probably have yielded to a strong inclination to dismount and drive my steed across first, before trusting myself on such an insecure looking erection. However, as my guide unhesitatingly rode across, I, with an assumed nonchalant air, followed. The track now diverged from the river, and rose diagonally up the mountain side. When we reached a considerable elevation, we called a halt, to rest our horses and that we might again look back to admire the view.

The Shotover, like a stream of silver, was to

be seen meandering through a green and yellow field, for from just below where we had first struck the river the country extended for some miles in an undulating plain, a good deal of which was devoted to agriculture. The whole was surrounded by magnificent hills. At one of the turns in the river, a large white shingle bank, known to the diggers of the neighbourhood as "big beach," was swarming with creatures resembling at the distance ants in an ant-hill, who, my guide informed me, were Chinamen, a large party of nearly two hundred having recently taken up this beach, the working of which for gold, on a large scale and in a systematic manner, had more than once been unsuccessfully attempted by the European miners; but the Chinese, with their frugal habits when not "on gold," and their capacity for earnest co-operation, were now making it pay handsomely for all their preliminary outlay and labour.

We could hear distinctly the creaking of their Californian pumps, and I observed that

they had abandoned the bamboo and baskets for the barbarian wheelbarrow, used for removing the auriferous dirt from the paddock to the "long tom," or sluice-box. My comrade did not enter into my curiosity in regard to the Chinese any better than he had done into my appreciation of the scenery, but urged that we should get over the saddle in the range as soon as possible. Before we reached the summit I found he was right, for, as we continued to ascend, we were exposed to the full blaze of the sun, and I was not sorry when we gained the saddle, and began to go down the shady side of the mountain, to find that we had got into a cooler atmosphere.

After descending some distance, and crossing divers spurs and gullies, we again approached the Shotover, which at length appeared in its true character. The river ran between two mountain chains, which rose with ever-changing steepness from its bed, the only variety consisting in slight modifications from the precipitous: viewed from the height, the sinuous

course of the river resembled an enormous black snake winding round the base of the rocky cliffs. Our path wound more extraordinarily than the river, for it was now high above it, now zig-zagging down to the water's edge, then, as if afraid of the dark current, it immediately started upwards again. "What track is that?" I asked my comrade, pointing to one a little above us—not a stone's-throw off, but on the other side of a ravine, caused by some landslip. My companion answered, "Ours, of course."

I was incredulous, but found him correct, for, after winding down close to the river's brink, we crossed the ravine and climbed up the other side till we reached the point I had observed, having descended and ascended some three or four hundred feet to gain only thirty or forty in actual distance. The path was so narrow that in many places, had I dismounted, I should have gone down a fathomless distance before reaching any landing-place, there being literally no room for a man to stand

between the horse and the edge. At such places I indulged in the hope that my steed was not subject to giddiness, which he fortunately was not, as he carried me safely to the end of my journey and back to Queenstown.

The wild grandeur of the scene was most impressive and awe-inspiring, and, what is rather unusual, more than came up to my expectations. The very rocks stood out against the glorious blue of the mid-day sky in grand wild fantastic forms, with the serrated edges and jagged points as sharp and defined as if carved by the hand of man. Speaking of these, reminds me of a theory of my digger friend, as being the only display of imagination exhibited by him. At first I was so lost in wonder, and so overawed by this, to me, new aspect of nature that I avoided conversation, but as here everything was new to me, my travelling companion was bent on shewing me all that he considered as lions of the district. When he so persisted in keeping up a fire of talk, I tried to confine him to the objects which interested me, but he

always went off at a tangent to some tale of the early days. I pointed out a narrow beach at the base of one of the cliffs, remarking how well the lighter colour of the stones below contrasted with the dark rocks above. The response was, "Ah, yes; that was a claim, that was. Do you see those stakes standing in the water? Well, the time of the rush, an old mate of mine and two or three other chaps, mostly foreigners—they called themselves the 'All Nations Company'—had a claim there. They built a wing-dam—them stakes is the remains of it—and they did get on splendid gold. They were just at work for a week, not counting the making of the dam, when the river rose and swamped them out. Jack Ashcroft—him that was my mate—got close on five pound's weight of gold for his share. Jack went up to the Frenchman's store, to wait till the river went down, and he knocked down every penny of it in less than no time. He was a free-handed chap, Jack. Ah! them was the good old times."

And thus he yarned on, referring only to the by-gone days, or giving vent to practical opinions, such as there being a rich patch in this or that hole in the river-bed, if one could only get at it profitably, till I spoke of the rocks being so fantastic in their shapes, and this started him on what was apparently a favourite theory of his as to the creation. What it was I cannot now recall, if I ever understood it; I can only recollect that his leading idea was that the earth was "a chinker thrown out by the sun," and from this he manufactured the earth in its present state without much trouble. He was sure of the chinker part of the theory, having often seen a chinker from a furnace present exactly the appearance these rocks did.

Shortly after noon we reached the township of Maori Point, once the head-quarters of a warden, now only consisting of one or two buildings of corrugated iron and a few "frame tents," as fixed tents usually lined with green baize or druggeting are called, and very snug they can be made too. The site of these erec-

tions was on a spur of a somewhat gentler slope than the majority of those around, but, as if to make amends for its tameness, it descended by a sheer precipice from immediately below the houses to the river. The aspect of the whole place was, as if it only wanted a slight push to send it bodily over the edge into the abyss below. Here we rested for some time, and fed both our horses and ourselves. As we were starting on our way again, we encountered, just as we were leaving the township, a long string of pack-horses entering it. The sight was novel and picturesque—a dozen or more horses with their pack-saddles empty, as they were returning down country, headed by a steady old stager, straggling along the narrow winding path; the rear brought up by the packer on horseback, his broad-brimmed wide-a-wake pulled well over his weather-beaten face.

I was now entertained with a story as to how the first woman who visited this wild region had been sent off from Queenstown at so much per pound weight. She was engaged by a specu-

lative hotel-keeper at Skipper's Point to fill the post of barmaid in his hotel; and fill it she did right well, because she was more than inclining to embonpoint. This "too solid flesh" was rather (to use a bull) a bone of contention between the enterprising publican and the packer. The former tried to get his barmaid taken up for a fixed sum, but the latter, having received timely warning from a friend of what was in store for him, stoutly refused to take her on any other terms than by weight. The hotel-keeper had to give in, reluctantly, but he was no loser by it, for the story spread among the diggers, and many visited the house to see the heroine who in all probability would never otherwise have done so.

For the rest of the day we pushed on our way steadily, the only special object of interest being the junction of Skipper's Creek with the Shotover—Skipper's Creek as we looked up it, appearing to traverse if possible a wilder narrower gorge than that through which we had been travelling. At the junction of

the two streams a small triangular comparatively flat terrace was formed, and on this were erected the few iron sheds known as "Skipper's Point Township." We did not cross, but continued on our way for some distance up the river to our destination, which, I discovered, rejoiced in the euphonious name of "Dead-man's Terrace," from the fact that nine poor fellows were buried there who met their death by a fall of earth in their claim. Having found the man I wanted, I bade good-bye to my fellow-traveller, who was going farther on. The business which had led me hither being completed, I proposed returning at once homeward, as there was no accommodation near, but I was hospitably prevailed on to accept a spare stretcher in a miner's hut; so, tethering my steed on a little plot of grass, I adjourned to the hut, thinking the Shotover amply deserving of all the epithets of roughness and wildness which had been bestowed upon it.

CHAPTER XI.

Bob the Hatter.

WHAT the origin of the phrase, "as mad as a hatter," can have been, I have often unsuccessfully endeavoured to discover. But doubtless it is from this phrase that the name of "hatter" has come to be applied, in mining parlance, to one who works alone or without a mate. There are always a few of these unsocial miners about every digging, and their solitariness arises from every imaginable cause. Frequently they are misanthropes, sometimes placid contented creatures, who, so long as they can make a living by "fossicking" about, are happy. On the occasion of my visit to the Shotover, I was induced, as I have stated, to accept the hospitality

of a miner, there being no accommodation-house near.

My host was a "hatter," but he always kept a spare stretcher for any chance passer-by; for though he would not, as I found, work with a mate, he was of a very sociable and hospitable disposition. His hut was remarkably snug and neat, very much more so than the usual run of diggers' habitations. It was built of mud, or "cob," as it is called, and was thickly thatched with snow-grass, and appeared well calculated to resist the rigours of a Shotover winter. After supper, to which we did ample justice, we sat for some time talking, and I was quite surprised at the ease with which my digger host was able to converse on many subjects. Like very many who follow the occupation of gold-mining, he had been at sea in his early years, and, having abandoned his sailor life in the fever of the Port Philip rush, had never since resumed it.

As the evening advanced we began to feel it rather chilly, and as fuel is valuable in that inhospitable region, we turned in between the

blankets for the sake of warmth, and lay and smoked and talked. Wondering what could have induced such a talkative companionable fellow as my host to choose the life of a "hatter," I tried to bring the conversation naturally round, so that he might of his own accord give me some clue to it, but as often as I led up to the subject he jumped away to something else. At length I put the question direct to him; he had raised himself on his elbow to cut a fresh pipe of tobacco. He quietly rubbed the tobacco between his broad palms for some time before he replied, and I thought I saw in his face an expression of sadness, as though I had awakened some unpleasant memories.

"Well," said he, as he slowly filled his pipe, "I don't know that it was anything particular that made me take to being a 'hatter,' but somehow circumstances have made me one lately, and if you like I can tell you some of these circumstances, and all about my last mate."

I expressed my willingness to listen to his story.

“It was not long after the Dunstan rush,” he said, “that I proposed to my mate that we should go to it—we were then at work down at Gabriel’s. Our claim was about worked out where we were, and as it had been a duffer, comparatively speaking, we both wished to leave that district. My mate, however, who had left a wife in Victoria, wanted to return there, and would not go farther up country, so we parted. After the usual ‘so long,’ I went off, leaving him to work out the paddock we had begun.

“I rolled up my swag and started off alone for the Dunstan. I trudged on, not in the best of humours with the world in general, as I was annoyed at my chum for resolving to return to Victoria so soon, since it was he who had induced me to come to Otago, and now he was for going back without giving this country a fair trial. He had been a good fellow, nevertheless, and had worked steadily and well. I had been very much troubled with bad ones before; they were always lazy,

and ever ready to get on the spree. It has happened with me more than once that after some months' hard work, we would wash up, and my mate would go off to sell the gold and pay our bills, but instead of this, he would get among a bad lot and knock down every penny of our hard-earned cash. It was just like my luck to have a good mate and then to lose him in this way. I blamed myself for having been rather hasty in parting because I could not get all I wanted; for, we might, after all, have done as well in Victoria as here, but I was too proud to go back, so on I went.

“The morning had been fine, but the wind soon went round to the sou'-west, and it blew very cold and looked as if it would snow. I had heard accounts of the height of the ranges which had to be crossed, and pushed on with the hope of reaching my destination before the snow came. Towards afternoon, I overtook a solitary man going in the same direction as myself; he bid me good-day, and asked if I was for the Dunstan. On my replying in the

affirmative, he suggested that two would be company. I found him a cheery young fellow, a new chum not long from the old country, but a few weeks' residence on the lower diggings had colonised him a good bit. He was apparently a swell's son from the way he spoke, but he turned out as good a bit of stuff as ever I met with. We had not travelled very far in company when the snow, which had been threatening all day, began to fall. Neither of us knew how far we were from shelter, but the track was well defined, so we tramped steadily on. After an hour or two of this work, we were forced to take refuge under a rock; for walking was getting heavy and the wind had risen to a gale. Fortunately, the fury of the storm moderated just before dark, but it was hopeless to attempt to travel that night, as we would be sure to lose the track now that everything was covered with snow, for it was hard enough to distinguish it by daylight.

“Neither of us had any provisions, nor had

either eaten anything since morning, for we had both calculated on reaching some roadside shanty before dinner-time, but in this we had been disappointed. We pitched our tent under the lee of the rock, and were preparing to turn in, with our blankets on the snow, when my new mate produced a bottle of Percy Davis' 'Pain-killer,' and laughingly said, 'Here's the only liquor I have got; will you have a nip.' I knew he was only in joke, but, thought I, it might help to warm us, so, filling a billy with snow, I gathered a bundle of withered stems of spear-grass, which were sticking up in all directions, and made a small fire on the rock. It was sufficient to melt the snow and heat the water, so we had a pannikin of hot water each, with a nobler of pain-killer in it, rolled ourselves in our blankets, and prepared to pass the night. We were thankful for our nip, as it produced a warm glow, and we had a very hard frost that night to fight against.

"By grey dawn we made a fresh start, so that we might get as far as possible while the

snow was hard. A couple of miles brought us to an accommodation-house, where we ate such a breakfast as might have been expected, seeing we were several meals in arrear. Somehow, without any express stipulation, we both seemed after our night in the snow to take it for granted that we should continue mates—as we did. In due time we reached the Dunstan, and waited there for some weeks in expectation of the river going down, so that we might take up a beach claim, but in place of its doing so it steadily rose till our patience and funds were well-nigh exhausted. We next came up here to the Shotover.

"I need not tell you anything about our journey up, for you have come over the same ground yourself, so you can guess what it was like in the days when no roads or tracks had been cut. The country well deserved the name some chap gave it of 'the riddings of creation.' It was very cold and severe weather for a time after we came here—lots of snow and ice. We camped on the bend of the river,

just a little way below where we now are, and by building a sod wall round our hut, and covering it with a new fly, we had made ourselves very snug; a couple of stretchers of some stout scrub and some old sacking kept us from the cold ground.

“My mate Bill, as I called him, and it was the only name I ever knew him by, was a very jolly young fellow: he told me that his father was a parson somewhere in England, and wanted him to become one too, but Bill wouldn’t, so they had a row, and then nothing would do for him but that he must be away to New Zealand. He was always building castles in the air, poor chap, about making a good rise and going home and astonishing his mother and sisters by walking in with his digger’s clothes on. How he used to laugh at the idea of how they would look when they recognised him. We set to work in the river, and built a wing-dam, Bill, gentleman’s son though he was, working as well as any mate I ever had, and seeming to think that even standing

in the cold water was a thing rather to be enjoyed than otherwise.

"In about four weeks we had our dam finished, and as reports had been reaching us from both up and down the river of big finds, Bill got intensely excited. I can recall his face at this moment, as he watched me washing a prospect in a dishful of stuff; it promised well from the quantity of black sand visible in the dish. I panned it off carefully, and the result was very satisfactory. 'Bob, old fellow,' said Bill, as he slapped me heartily on the shoulder, 'it is going to be a pile, and then for old England.' We got our cradle to work. I think Bill would never have tired of rocking it; he used to say that its 'sough, sough' was the best music he had ever heard. It was very pleasant to work with such a stirring cheery mate, and we were doing so well that I even began to be infected with Bill's castle-building propensities, and speculated as to what I should do with my little pile, though I always tried to damp Bill's spirits by telling him a flood would come

before we had worked out the claim; but he only laughed at me and called me an old raven.

"At the end of the first week we had over a hundred ounces of gold in our tent, and by the end of the second week we had as much more. I now began to get a little afraid of our being stuck up and robbed, for I knew there were a few old hands about who had emigrated at their country's expense. Still I was so afraid of the river rising on us that I was loath to lose any time. Our tent was only a few yards up the bank above where we were at work, and, as we could keep an eye on it, we stuck to the claim. One afternoon, about the middle of the next week, the weather changed; it became quite mild, the wind came down in puffs from the north-east and the sky was overcast.

"As we left the claim that evening, I said to Bill that we would soon get a chance to sell our gold, as it was evidently going to rain a bit, and that if we had much of that we should be swamped out. He laughed at me as usual for an old croaker, and said it would clear up to

frost again before morning, and even if it did not, the river would not rise so fast as all that. Bill was exceedingly talkative that evening as we lay and smoked a bit, as we're doing now. As usual, he spoke of home and what presents he would give his sisters, even the rain beginning to come down did not affect him. 'It's only a shower; we'll have frost again before morning. Good-night, old fellow,' he said as he turned in his stretcher and almost immediately fell asleep. I tried to follow his example, but could not. I lay listening to the pattering drops on the canvas, which now betokened that it had set in for steady rain. I generally sleep well and soundly, but I suppose the unwonted sound of the rain beating over my head kept me awake, and then I began to get restless. I fell to wondering what would be the effect of the rain, and whether it was likely to be raining or snowing away back in the snow-capped mountains. It was so mild that I feared it must be the former, and that, as a consequence, our claim would be flooded out.

“ At last I dozed off into a restless sleep, during which I was conscious that it was raining all the time, and yet I was dreaming of my own childish days. I fancied I was sitting on the bank of the stream in which I had as a boy been accustomed to bathe, and that one of my companions was trying to push me in. A more vigorous push woke me up with a start, and a gurgling sound as if in the tent caught my ear. I jumped up to ascertain the cause, and put my feet down in water, nearly up to my knees.

“ I realised our situation at once, and caught Bill by the shoulders and shook him; he only muttered something about sister Mary. I felt the water rising on my legs; there was not a moment to lose. I pulled him out of bed, and exclaimed, ‘ Good God ! Bill, the river’s up on us.’ He answered ‘ all right ’ very coolly, and, as I have thought since, as if he were not awake. ‘ Come on quick,’ I said as I sprung through the tent door and bounded up the steep bank a little way. I looked round ex-

pecting to see Bill close by me, but he was not there: I saw through the darkness the white tent move, then wholly disappear in the black moving mass below me. And where was Bill? I called his name and cooeied, but got no reply. He can't be carried away by the stream, I said: he would have uttered a cry if he had. He must be near, and unable to hear me for the noise of the river.

"Nothing could be done till daylight, so I crept under the shelter of a large stone and longed for day to break. I had not long to wait, though it seemed an age to me, half-clad as I was, cowering and shivering in the rain. At the first streak of dawn I began to move about searching for Bill, but could find no trace of him. The tent was gone, and far above it the river rushed with swift and steady sweeping current, bearing on its surface innumerable cradles, sluice-boxes, pieces of wood, and such like records of disaster higher up.

"Bill's fate I could not doubt about; poor fellow, he must have been caught in that de-

vouring flood and carried away. I have seen many men killed one way and another in my time without feeling much over it, but when I thought of poor young Bill, so happy and merry, carried away by that horrid rapid river, I could not restrain my tears. How he failed to escape I could but conjecture, and only two solutions of the difficulty present themselves. Either he can't have been properly awake, or else he must have tried to get his gold out from among his blankets. The whole thing happened so quickly, and in the dark, so that there was nothing to guide one as to how it occurred. The falling of part of the sod wall of the tent must have awakened me, and from the time I awoke till I scrambled up the river's bank not more than a couple of minutes could have elapsed.

"I proceeded down the river, and found that Bill's was not a solitary case; many a poor fellow had been swept away in a similar manner, and how many met their death that night will, I believe, never be known. I at

once started in search of the body, and hearing that several had been recovered from the stream down at the Kawarax junction, some forty miles below the scene of the disaster, I went there. I found Bill's body was one of those recovered, and I also recognised that of another unfortunate digger who worked not far from us.

"After following the corpses to the grave, I returned here, and somehow I have never since cared to exert myself to make more than a living, or go in mates with any one. I regretted exceedingly that I did not know Bill's last name, as I could not write to his friends, who are very likely still hoping their wanderer may turn up again some day. So you see I am just a 'hatter' because I have lost the liking for making money, or perhaps, some folks would say, turned lazy. But it is getting late. Good-night to you."

"Good-night," I replied, and turned my face to the wall, but it was long before I could sleep. Although I knew that the hut we were in was

high above flood level, and there never had been such a flood since ¹⁸⁶² as that I had been hearing of, still the story, heard on the very spot of the incident as I might say, with the noise of the same river sounding in my ears, so wrought on my imagination that I pictured the awful scene again and again ere I slept. Next morning, after an early breakfast, and thanking my host for his hospitality, I left him, and saw no more of "Bob the Hatter."

CHAPTER XII.

Old Bands.

ALTHOUGH New Zealand never was a penal settlement, yet in some parts the slightest possible tinge of what is called the convict element is to be met with. This is particularly the case on the gold fields, many liberated convicts having found their way hither during the great rush from Australia in 1862. Those "expirees" are seldom found here in such good positions as is frequently the case in some of the Australian colonies. I have only heard of one or two men of substance in New Zealand of whom rumour said that they, or their not by any means remote ancestors, had worn the "yellow jacket." I have in my sojourn in the colony met with a

few who were admittedly "old hands," as the phrase is, some of whom could, if they chose, relate strange experiences. I say admittedly, for I have known several about whose antecedents there was a vague uncertainty which they themselves did not seem disposed to clear away. When such men chanced to quarrel with any of their neighbours, some one who had known them on the other side was sure to turn up and allege he knew all about them, and that all was not to their credit. The excuses resorted to for the purpose of hiding the real state of affairs are sometimes very amusing.

I remember one fellow who, having admitted that he had been in Sydney in the very early days, and made one or two remarks rendering it a not unnatural inference that he had "left his country for his country's good," was soon after taunted by another of the company, with whom he had had some words over their cards, that he had not come out at his own expense. In an unguarded moment he admitted the impeachment by adopting the *tu quoque* line of

argument, and replying, "No more did you." The accuser was immediately exultant, declaring that he had always been convinced that such was the case. The accused was, however, too old a hand to be caught, and at once rejoined that he had not come out at his own expense, because he came out when a boy as a gentleman's tiger! Whether this assertion carried conviction or not I can't tell, but at any rate it evoked approving plaudits from those present, such as, "good for you, old man," and turned the laugh against his adversary. When the fact of being a convict, "or lag," as the slang phrase is, is acknowledged, the reason for the punishment is generally shrouded in mystery, or else some *gentlemanly* cause is assigned. Poaching is a great favourite; another is borrowing a horse and being nabbed before there was time to return it.

Frequently one could almost tell from his manner that a man had been a convict. Your thorough convict is often cringingly civil, and has a sneaking hang-dog look which betrays

him. He is so different from the colonial mechanic or miner. He wants their sturdy independent air and blunt manner, and, as a rule, those who know them best, know that there is no use in their denying that they belong to the fraternity of old hands, even though they loathe to speak of their dark days, and no wonder, for, if only a tithe of their tales were true, there must have been horrors perpetrated in those times almost worse than could be imagined.

One man I have spoken to, he had no diffidence in talking of the time when he was a convict. He was old and little—about five feet—and at the time I saw him he was earning an honest living in a small diggings' township by catching horses, carrying water, and other odd jobs; altogether old Billy was a very useful member of society. So far as happy temperament was concerned, he was a rival of the renowned "Artful Dodger"—in fact, but that the cause of his "lagging" was different, I could have believed him to have been that worthy him-

self. As a boy, his bodily stuntedness and mental cunning rendered him peculiarly valuable to a gang of burglars. He sometimes did a little business on his own account, and his emigration to the colonies arose from such a transaction. While lingering about the streets one day, he overheard a conversation between two women, from which he gathered that one of them was living alone in a large house, while the family were out of town. With an eye to business, he followed them and found the house,—keeping near enough, he heard them make an appointment for the next day at a distant part of the town. He was thinking of “laying on some of his older pals” to the place, but he knew very well that if he informed the gang of the place, a very small share of the booty would come his way. Accordingly, he resolved to make the attempt alone. Next day a ragged urchin might have been seen in a quiet street, singing to himself and tossing his cap in the air. Quite accidentally the cap went down an area, and of course the gamin went after it. Had

there been any one to watch his movements, he might have been seen to push up a window which had been left a little open, the errant domestic trusting to the protection of the iron bars; these were no bar to the youngster's progress, who soon managed to wriggle his small person between them, and found himself in the kitchen. A hasty survey satisfied him that there was not much plunder to be obtained in the lower regions; he went upstairs, but here he encounters what at first promises to be a thorough check to his farther progress—at the head of the stair was a locked door. Billy, for he was none other, was for some time baffled; the key was in the door, it was true, but only on the wrong side; if he pushed it out, it might go too far for him to reach under the door, and if it did not, the mat would prevent his getting at it. "You can guess I blessed the servant for going out at the front door," said Billy, in recounting it with apparent zest. At last a happy thought struck him; he had seen a reel of cotton thread

in the kitchen; to get it and tie the thread round the projecting part of the key was done in less than no time; the key was then turned round, pushed out, and manœuvred with the string till it lay close alongside of the door. To work it underneath was now an easy matter, and Billy had the house before him. He did not gain much for his pains, for everything was locked that could be locked, and he was without tools; what his puny strength could gain an entrance to by breaking, he broke; after all, the only booty he obtained was an old watch and some jewellery, which he got from a locked box out of a locked drawer. The table containing the drawer he turned upside down, and danced on the bottom of it till it gave way, and then he assaulted the box with the poker.

Billy, thinking he had been long enough in the house, now cautiously beat a retreat. Before he had succeeded in disposing of his plunder, he rashly yielded to the temptation to purloin an old gentleman's pocket-handkerchief, and had the misfortune to be caught in the act. At the

station-house the other stolen goods were found on him, and could not, it may hardly be said, be satisfactorily accounted for. Inquiries were instituted, and the owner discovered; but how to account for the articles reaching Billy's possession was a difficulty. The master of the house said the things must have been taken by some one who knew the premises, and at once dismissed all his servants. Master William's part in the affair would probably never have been discovered had he not himself afterwards confessed; and I have no doubt he was actuated in this by the desire to let what he considered an achievement be known. For this offence, while quite a boy, he was transported to Van Diemen's Land; he managed to escape once, but after wandering in the bush for some days he was retaken.

Doubtless Billy was a troublesome prisoner, for, even from his own account, he was continually receiving further punishments; these at last became so serious that he was, in the reign of one Governor (whom he characterised

as a regular tyrant), condemned to death. He seemed to consider this a crowning honour, especially as the reprieve only arrived when he was on the scaffold. "That's more than most men can say," he said quite proudly when telling me of it. He did not tell me why he had received such a sentence, but he seemed such a good-natured fellow that I was fain to hope that it was for nothing very serious; for in these times I believe the authorities were not very particular.

Dark crimes were sometimes committed: one man assured me that in one of the penal settlements a gang of lads, who were employed at stone-breaking in a yard, fell in a body on the warder, who was a very harsh man, and beat him to death with their hammers—they all knew very well that if anyone refused to assist, he would share the same fate. Thank heaven that, so far as we in New Zealand are concerned, those who could have been either actors or spectators in such horrid scenes could be numbered by tens. That we do not suffer from

the few old hands among us, may be gathered from the fact that, although valuable stocks of goods are kept in wooden and iron shops and houses, the crime of burglary is wholly unknown with us.

The gaol regulations in Otago, in the early days of the settlement, present a pleasing contrast to the scenes to which I have referred. The only prisoners were a few runaway sailors, detained till their ships should sail. The gaoler was such a hearty kindly fellow that they were always loath to leave; and if ever they revisited the port they always called at the house of detention. It is a well-known story among old Otagans, and is, I believe, a fact, that occasionally the gaoler would give his prisoners a holiday, and tell them that if they were not back by ten o'clock they would be locked *out*! This was looked on as a serious punishment. How pleasant to have resided in such a primitive settlement. When, on the discovery of gold, the people came from Australia in thousands, a good many bad characters came to New Zea-

land along with them. The police force, who were also old Australians, knowing from previous experience many of those notorious villains, kept an eye on them. Some returned whence they came, others fell into the clutches of the law, while a few settled down into peaceable citizens.

The police force was long one of the boasts of Otago, and really it would have been difficult to find a finer-looking body of men. They were remarkable for their height: the uniforms, too, added to their appearance; instead of the tight-buttoned frock-coat of the English "bobby," they wore a short loose coat, or jumper, of fine cloth, with a double-peaked glazed shako. A stranger would have supposed every man an officer. The mounted police was a favourite resort of many young fellows of good family. I knew one young Irish "honourable" who was serving as a common trooper, and his chief friend was a Prussian count. Many of the force were old soldiers who had served their country with distinction. During the Crimean

war only twenty men in the British army received the decoration of the Legion of Honour ; of these twenty, two served for several years in the Otago mounted constabulary. The mounted police are armed with swords and carbines; they are for the most part employed up the country, and of necessity are armed, as one of their duties consists in escorting and taking charge of the gold, which is sent down from the different diggings once a month. Formerly this escort waggon, with its team of four horses, surrounded by the military-looking mounted police, dashing into town at a smart pace, created some stir and excitement; but now-a-days, with a view to economy, it is conveyed by the ordinary mail-coach, and is much less numerously guarded. The force is efficient as ever, but, as regards the personal appearance of the men, it has now deteriorated a little.

I remarked on the absence of burglary as a crime, and I may go further and say that, considering the number of inhabitants, the amount of crime generally is small. The most common

phase in which it presents itself is embezzlement, and obtaining money by false pretences—crimes perpetrated by young men from the old country, who, away from the controlling influences of home and friends, fall into habits of gambling and drinking, and so drift to ruin. And here let me raise a word of warning against the practice too often indulged in of sending out to the colonies the class of young men known to the Scotch by the expressive term of "*Ne'er do weels.*" I have known many such; and if they have not all descended so low as to become criminals, they have sunk socially to the lowest depths. To such there are more temptations here than at home, and none of the restraints which the presence and opinions of friends always exercise. The idea that any one will get on in, or that anything is good enough for, the colonies, is a most erroneous one.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Chinese.

ABOUT eight years ago, at a time when the province was suffering from the reaction occasioned, by the feverish excitement and overtrading of the early days of the gold fields, some of the Chinese residents in the neighbouring colony of Victoria made overtures to the government, proposing that a number of their countrymen should emigrate to these shores provided they received a guarantee of protection. The government of the day replied, as they could not help doing, that no special guarantee could be given, but that if the Chinese came they would receive the same protection as the other inhabitants. This movement was probably made by the Chinese

to ascertain if the government were likely to throw obstacles in their way, as was done in some of the other colonies. When they first went to Victoria, a roll-tax of £10 a head was imposed for a time. Here there were many advocates for pursuing such a course, but, though public feeling for a time ran high, no attempt at prohibition was made. It was chiefly on the gold-fields where the spirit of antagonism to the celestials showed itself. The miners attributed all sorts of thieving propensities and villainies to them, and on this account objected to their coming; and certainly, in a country where the result of months of arduous labour is left not only exposed, but capable of being seriously reduced, if not wholly removed, in a few hours, the diggers are warranted in endeavouring to have only colonists of undoubted integrity introduced. The mercantile part of the community, on the other hand, still grieving over the exodus of European miners to the West Coast rush, said, "Give us consumers, no matter whether they be white or yellow." So, despite of threa-

tened opposition, John Chinaman came, at first from Melbourne and latterly from China direct, till now there are about four thousand of them in our midst. Only at one place was there any open attempt made to deter their approach. At Naseby a few infuriated miners caught an unfortunate Chinaman, and putting him in a barrel with both ends knocked out, trundled him down the street. The poor wretch managed to escape from his tormentors, and fled as for his life: the fright upset his reason, and he was thrown a burden on the country—a pauper lunatic. This was happily about the only instance of violence I ever heard of, and those who had witnessed anti-Chinese riots in Victoria considered it mild.

At the time the Chinese began to visit Otago, numbers of men were out of employment, and there were frequent murmurs from the working classes. The strangers did not, however, interfere with the labour market, but at once adopted gold mining as their pursuit, and plodded patiently at it, a course which was open to any of the European “unemployed.” They

prosecuted their work with, in many instances, marked success, and before many months had elapsed, a stream of Chinese emigration as well as immigration had set in. Once possessed of two or three hundred pounds, they can return, it is said, to the "flowery land," to pass the rest of their lives in peace and plenty; and as their paternal government prohibits the emigration of the women, the men, on attaining the wished-for sum, return to their wives and sweethearts.

Since their arrival they have quite lived down the evil reports circulated before their coming; and, though one or two have figured in the criminal calendar, they have on the whole proved themselves peaceable and orderly citizens. As one of their number put it, "Chinamen all same Englishmen, some welly good, some welly bad;" and really if one were to compare the conduct of these heathens with a corresponding number of Englishmen of the same, that is, of the lowest rank, I fear the comparison would be unfavourable to the latter.

The Chinese often take up old partially-worked

auriferous ground and work it out so thoroughly that nothing is left by them ; their frugal habits enabling them to live on what a European miner would starve on. Speaking against the Chinese, I heard a miner say, " Oh ! this country's cooked by them. There was Doctor's flat—a man knew he could always knock out a few shillings there if he was hard up—and now, since these yellow wretches came, there's nothing left but the bed rock."

Though eminently a conservative people, they are not slow to make use of the various institutions which accompany civilization, such as the post-office and banks. All apparently can write, at least all with whom I have come in contact. I only met with one who either could not or would not sign his name ; and I have seen more than one who could do so in English characters. I asked one of these how he learned this accomplishment, and he told me that at one time, when working for an Englishman, he had a written agreement with him, in which he found his own name, which he copied till he

was able to write it quite freely. This displayed a desire for improvement that very few of any English navvies would have exhibited under similar circumstances. They appear to claim kinship with all who come from their own locality, and this is the only feasible mode of explaining the inexhaustible number of cousins which some of them possess. They often render assistance to one another, and thus soon acquire a knowledge of the use of both banks and post-offices. I have often addressed their letters for them in English, while they had covered the other side of the envelope with the address in their own hieroglyphics, including directions to the postman that the letter was to "go quick," by which it is to be hoped that functionary would be edified.

Their names are sometimes amusing; I have known one who gloried in that of "Ah Sin," while another, who belied his title most wofully, answered to the name of "Ah Fat," and the distinguished appellation of a third was "Ah Men." I have been told that the prefix Ah denotes that

the individual who bears it is still a bachelor, and that the benedicts take their wives' names along with their own, as in Sun Long, Wong Sing, or Low Ket. Whether my informant was veracious or no, I cannot tell; but I thought it might save many a managing mamma a vast deal of trouble if we adopted such a custom, for she could at once tell from the names of her daughters' partners if they were eligible, in this respect at least.

I was once rather puzzled with a name. A Chinaman with whom I was transacting some business called himself "Mac ah Cow." I wondered if any ancient Highland clan had, in antediluvian times, settled in the Celestial empire; but any such idea was dissipated by an inspection of the features of this new Mac. I repeated the vaccine title, and was proceeding to write it down, when its owner strongly objected to my pronunciation, and vehemently reiterated "Mac ah Cow." I could not perceive any difference, and shook my head in token thereof, when a happy thought struck

John Chinaman, and he suddenly exclaimed "You savey, Matthey, Mac?" I now understood him, but, to make sure, said, "Matthew, Mark?" to which Mr. Mark ah Cow replied, "All light," and smiled with satisfaction. On inquiry I discovered that he was one of the few converts to Christianity made amongst his countrymen.

I have often wondered at the apparent apathy exhibited by the different Christian churches in regard to the Chinese. One would have thought that when hundreds of intelligent heathens came to their very doors, they would have aroused themselves to a vigorous effort to evangelize every man of them. The Presbyterians are the only body which have taken any measures to secure this end; but anything attempted in the province is slight, when compared with what might and ought to be done if the Christians of Otago were fully alive to the additional responsibility thus thrown upon them.

Taken as a whole, the heathen Chinese are a very hard-working, industrious, steady people,

generally of a light-hearted, merry disposition, and, though wearing usually solemn countenances, are easily amused. I have seen a couple of them pay half-a-crown a head for admittance to an amateur concert, and sit with beaming faces during the performance, which they afterwards criticised as being "welly good sing song." They are fond of being taken notice of by Europeans. A friend of mine, who was very fond of chatting with the Chinamen whenever an opportunity presented itself, was, however, on one occasion sadly snubbed by the celestial to whom he was talking. John conversed pleasantly for some time, but at last his patience was exhausted, and, being anxious to resume his occupation, he said to my friend, whom he evidently supposed to be neglecting his own business, "Ah, you too muchee lazy!" It is almost needless to say the hint was taken, and John was left to pursue his avocation in peace.

If the Chinese have their faults, they are mostly such as do not annoy their neighbours, and they are admittedly quiet and peaceable

citizens. They gamble, it is true, but it is only amongst themselves; and if some do smoke opium, the effect is not to send them out to the streets as noisy brawlers. As to their dishonesty and pilfering practices, my experience of them is that they are no worse than Englishmen, but only cleverer and more adroit in their modes of swindling. There are amongst them, too, fellows of sterling honesty. I have known a Chinaman return half-a-crown which he discovered had been overpaid him. A store-keeper on the gold-fields told me that when the Chinese first came to his district he for a time resolutely set his face against giving them any credit. A party of them, however, who were engaged in an undertaking from which they could not possibly obtain any result for some time, asked for credit, and he, partly as an experiment, and partly because he thought the claim would prove a rich one, granted their request, and opened an account with them. The enterprise proved more laborious than was anticipated, and, worse than all, was without the

desiderated result. The store-keeper's account against the party had by this time run up to between £30 and £40; and he owned that he felt he had acted foolishly when the Chinamen told him that the claim was "no good." He satisfied himself that the report was true, and philosophically made up his mind "to grin and bear it," resolving at the same time never to give credit to a Chinaman again. They, however, soon returned, and said to him that they intended seeking "fresh fields of pastures new," but proposed to leave one of their number behind, to whom they said they would remit money to pay their debt. The store-keeper, being by this time resigned to his loss, made no objection to their proposal, fully convinced he had seen the last of both the Chinamen and his money; for, having been more than once left in the lurch by European miners when their claim proved a "duffer," he could expect nothing else from the Chinese. They went away, and, as promised, left a man behind them; and at the time the store-keeper related his experience to

me, more than two-thirds of the debt had been paid.

The faith of this store-keeper in the Mongolian race was subsequently destroyed, as he was made the victim of some gold manufacturers. A few of the Chinese occasionally adopt this rapid means of acquiring wealth ; and from a basis of lead, with the assistance of a little of the precious metal, make an imitation of the alluvial gold so successfully that even an expert cannot always be certain of the fraud without resorting to the aid of tests. Notwithstanding that the store-keeper was in the habit of buying gold daily, he was duped, and bought a spurious article, containing gold worth only 18s. an ounce, at the rate of £3, 15s. The fraud was discovered at the bank, and the perpetrators of the swindle captured with the results of their knavery upon them. Since that time there have been only two cases detected, in one of which the swindlers managed to elude the police.

It is not to such pursuits and gold-mining

alone that the cousins of the moon devote themselves. Many are store-keepers, some of these being very wealthy; others are carpenters or cabinet-makers; while numbers betake themselves to market-gardening—an occupation in which they are very successful, usually underselling the Europeans. As cabinet-makers, they turn out very neat work; and they may be seen in various parts of Dunedin, squatting down on their low bench, working away with their Chinese planes, in which now, however, they have substituted Sheffield steels for those manufactured in their own land.

The yellow men are fast spreading themselves all over the world; and they appear destined to play a not unimportant part in its future history. Possessing all the powers of the Anglo-Saxon race, of adapting themselves to various climates, they excel the Saxon in their powers of enduring heat; and I doubt not their race will one day predominate in many of the hotter parts of the Australian continent.

CHAPTER XIV.

Young New Zealand and His Education.

IN a province only twenty-five years of age, young New Zealand cannot be expected to have as yet developed any peculiar characteristics. As children they do not exhibit any remarkable precocity like the Yankees, who begin almost as soon as they can speak to "trade off" their old rattles for toys more suited to their advancing years. In Otago at present the rising generation are most remarkable for healthy sturdiness, and to the visitor from Australia they seem the very pictures of ruddiness. The climate of New Zealand seems remarkably conducive to the production of children of stamina and strength. In a family of my acquaintance, who

came to Otago after some years' residence in the colony of Victoria, the difference between the children born in Victoria and Otago was very marked—the Victorians inclining to be lanky and pale-faced, while the Otagans were stouter and stronger-looking in every respect.

The effect which a country will have on the race inhabiting it, cannot, until two or three generations have been born there, be anything but conjecture. But there is even now promise of the New Zealanders becoming no mean race; and, if a *sanum corpus* and abundant facilities for acquiring knowledge will produce such a result, they should also be strong intellectually.

The early Otago settlers, with a Scottish regard for learning, established early a system of schools as like as possible to the parish schools of their native land. The general management of this system of education is vested in a central board. The provincial council annually votes a sum for educational purposes. Last year (1873) the vote amounted

to £23,306. Reserves of sections of land in different parts of the country having from time to time been made, the rental from them recoups the treasury to a large extent for this vote for education. In the different districts where schools are established, committees of the inhabitants are formed for the control of the affairs of the schools. These committees receive from the central board an annual grant in aid of current expenses, besides occasional special grants towards building and maintaining their school-houses or masters' residences. The children in this way receive a good education at a much more moderate rate than would otherwise be the case if the schools were self-supporting. The education board also pays the fees for any child whose friends are unable to do so, so that there is no excuse for any child going uneducated, though education is not compulsory. In Dunedin there are three elementary or district schools, attended by over fifteen hundred children, besides the free infant schools, with an attendance of about two

hundred, and numerous private institutions, as well as three or four district schools in the suburbs. Then there is a High school, designed to carry the boys further than the district schools can pretend to. In connexion with this institution there are twelve scholarships of the aggregate annual value of £382 10s. These are competed for publicly, and are tenable for five years. A high school for girls was also established by the provincial council three years ago, and has proved highly successful. It was founded with the object of affording higher education for girls than can be attained at the district schools at a moderate rate. The fee for the ordinary course at this school—which comprises besides the “three R’s,” French, drawing, and natural science—is only two pounds per quarter, which, in the colonies at least, must be deemed very moderate. A school of art has also been founded in connection with one educational system. Classes are held for ladies at the schools in the day-time, and in the evening

for artizans and others who are engaged during the day, and many avail themselves of these classes.

What has not inaptly been styled the keystone of the educational structure has recently been added, by the establishment of the Otago University. Several large tracts of land, at present leased to pastoral tenants, have been set aside as an endowment, and these, as the colony progresses, will become more valuable. The present income of the institution, apart from class fees, is about £3,300 per annum, of which £600 is received from the Presbyterian Church funds, and the rest is mainly derived from the rents. There are at present four professors—one for Latin, Greek, and English Literature; a second for Logic, Moral Philosophy, and Political Economy; another for Mathematics; while Chemistry and Geology are taught by the fourth. Law lectures are also given under the auspices of the University, but the lecturer is not on the same footing as the professors. The attendance of students has

been greater than was anticipated, and the Otago University, which is housed in an excellent building, is the healthy nucleus of a flourishing institution.

An attempt has been made to obtain a Royal Charter for the Otago University ; but this has not been granted, the reason being that, through a feeling of jealousy to Otago, some of the inhabitants of the other provinces succeeded in obtaining an act establishing a New Zealand University. This so-called university, supposed to be a peripatetic degree-conferring body, possessing no local habitation, but merely a name, has, by the use of that name, prevented the grant of a charter to what should have been a sister, not a rival, institution—the University of Otago—but for whose existence it would not have been thought of for years to come. The authorities at home decline to grant charters to two universities at present.

This spirit of petty jealousy is one of the great evils of the Australasian Colonies ; for,

leaving healthy rivalry a long way behind, it retards many a good measure, and sometimes leads to foolish excess. Colony is jealous of colony, island of island, province of province, country of town, miners of cockatoos, and so *ad infinitum*; and with no silent somnolent envy, but in a thorough dog-in-the-manger snarling style. It is a fault, however, incidental to our youth; and when some members of this nagging brotherhood have really outstripped their fellows in the race of life—beyond hope of being overtaken—the whole will settle down into a contented and happy family.

In connection with the educational institutions of the province may be mentioned the public libraries. The Government annually appropriated a sum for the purchase of books, which were distributed over the province wherever the inhabitants chose to form a library; the Government, subject to a few trivial stipulations, giving books gratis, equal in value to the amount expended in the purchase of literature

during that year; or, if it were preferred, they would receive money from a district, and give back double its value in books. Excellent libraries have thus been established in every little township, sometimes in connection with the school, sometimes not.

The educational system of which I have been speaking is confined to the province of Otago, other provinces having their own, all more or less efficient.

A year or two ago a bill was introduced into the colonial parliament, to provide one uniform system of education for the whole colony; but it was ultimately withdrawn, after a tough fight on the question of secular *versus* religious education. A colonial bill has also been introduced this session (1873); but as it is not compulsory, but merely one that may be adopted or not by any of the provinces which choose to do so, the battle has not been so keen, and the question is as far from settlement as ever. The Roman Catholics opposed the secular system to a man. The Anglican Church also threw

their weight into the same, as well as the clergy of many other denominations. It is strange how a question like this has to be fought over and over again, even though the experiment has been tried elsewhere successfully.

The Roman Catholics, of course, in obedience to the dictates of their church, oppose any but a denominational system. Many people too, without considering the real bearings of the question, get up a sentimental cry that we must not have a godless system established: and sentiment carries folks a long way. Godless system, forsooth!

When I recall the days when I had the Shorter Catechism flogged into me, I wonder if that is what they call a godly system. Or perhaps they would prefer the farce of a master, despised by his scholars for his mean and sneaking ways, gabbling over a prayer, watching that the boys kept their eyes closed at the same time, and before the echo of the "amen" had died away, mercilessly thrashing an unfortunate

for some offence which he had discovered—in some underhand way—had been committed the previous day. Boys see through the humbug and hypocrisy of such doings, and are fortunate if they do not imbibe such opinions of religion and religious professions as lead them to judge them all by their school standard.

A great deal of so-called religious teaching does more harm than good, I am firmly convinced. If it could be ensured that the teachers were really men of high Christian principle, this objection would be removed. But there still remains the strong one, that in a mixed community, where children of persons of all shades of religious opinion are educated together, it is better to confine the education undertaken by the state, to subjects about which there is no dispute, leaving the religious element to parents and the churches, in the hope that it might stir the latter, both clergy and laity, into greater activity in the matter of Sunday schools, as has proved to be the case in America.

The confusion which arises in some minds between the forms and principles of religion, in making use of the expression that it is a thing which should be introduced in every-day life, was amusingly illustrated here some few years ago. A sanctimonious grocer got into pecuniary difficulties, the circumstances not being such as to excite compassion for him. He was compelled to call a meeting of his creditors, and at the appointed hour he entered the room where they were assembled, and gravely proposed that they should begin the proceedings with prayer. When they had recovered from their amazement, and before the proposal could be carried into effect, one of the creditors, who was of the Hebrew nation, gave the godly grocer what is usually termed a piece of his mind, in no measured terms. And so it is with the education question; it is a form that is fought for, and very often an empty one, or, at best, the desire to inculcate some dry dogma which is set up on high and styled religion. But it is perhaps

rather out of place to introduce such questions here.

There is one thing in which the Colonial-born youth is rather deficient, and that is perhaps not to be wondered at—I mean patriotic feeling. In a place where every one who has attained the age of six or seven-and-twenty must of necessity have come from somewhere else, it is not surprising that the rising generation should not be imbued with a very patriotic spirit. The Colonial youth are always hearing their elders' far-off native lands spoken of by those around them with feelings of affection, and thus ideas are generated that in New Zealand there is not much to be proud of. This is not the case in the neighbouring colony of Victoria, where the people have a dash of the genuine Yankee boast about them. And doubtless, as the proportion of native-born population to immigrants increases, a national feeling will arise, despite the efforts of Caledonian and Hibernian societies to remind them whence they sprung. New Zealand is a country likely to produce in time a truly

patriotic, if not a boasting people. I can fancy
some day a New Zealander singing something
in this strain :—

Dear are thy rugged hills to me,
My own wave-circled native land,
Thy very soil is dearly loved,
From snowy peak to ocean's strand.
Thy massive mountains bare and stern,
Their crystal torrents leaping free,
Thy shady dells, the haunt of fern,
Where is their like to me?

My father sings of Scotland's hills,
The bonny heath, and harebell blue,
And memories of his country's ills,
And Scottish hearts both stout and true.
My gentle mother tells me oft
Of merry England's flowery vales,
And pleased my youth in accents soft,
With her land's pleasant tales.

But these fair lands to me are naught
Compared with this mine own,
Though not endeared by freedom bought
With blood from tyrant's throne.
Though quaint old stories tell us not
Of the good old merry times,
Thank Heaven ! loved hills, 'tis not your lot
To remind of ancestral crimes.

What though no martyrs' hallowed blood
Has stained thy grassy slopes,
'Tis not past memories we prize,
But our own strong ardent hopes :
For thou, Zealandia, yet shall rise
The peaceful mistress of the sea,
And noble work is ours to build
A happy nation, great and free.

CHAPTER XV.

Cockatoos and Squatters.

MANY words in daily use in Otago bear traces of importation from the neighbouring Australian colonies, and none betrays its Australian origin more than that used to denote the agricultural class, who are usually styled "Cockatoos." Important as they are, the cockatoos are not so interesting, from a literary point of view, as the miners. Farming in Britain is not generally considered a very elevating pursuit, nor are its devotees deemed artistic figures, and in New Zealand it is not different. "The even tenour of their way" is as uneventful on this side of the globe as on that where Gray wrote his immortal poem. Indeed, there are fewer dis-

turbing influences here than in the old country; with a milder and more equable climate, they are saved from many of the difficulties with which their British *confreres* have to contend—as, for instance, stock thrives better here, and does not require to be winter-fed as is the case in England. But if some slight advantages be gained in that respect, they are somewhat counterbalanced by the lower prices obtainable for their produce.

One often hears the complaint that farming does not pay, but, notwithstanding this, many make a good living by it, while others make money. One reason why many fail at farming is that they know nothing of their business. It appears to be the height of some men's ambition to acquire a piece of land. Such men, perhaps by trade carpenters, or even tailors, expend all their capital in land, and then have to borrow money to improve and stock it, so that in such cases it is not to be wondered at if, with high rates of interest and no previous experience, farming be not made

to pay. Agriculturists have also to pay high rates of wages to those employed by them, and this also reduces the margin of profit.

Against all this must, however, be put the great advantage—that the majority of the farmers are freeholders, and thus escape high rents and putting the profits into the landlord's pocket. Formerly the Cockatoos used to do very well from the sale of their cattle, but, as the country has become more fully stocked up, cattle have greatly depreciated in value, and were a year or two ago literally unsaleable. Matters are now somewhat improved in this respect, partly owing, no doubt, to the establishment of the various meat-preserving factories throughout the province, which, by providing a certain outlet, has re-established confidence. Still prices are low. Fat cattle were quoted at £6 10s. in the Dunedin market in the month of August, 1873.

Besides being their own landlords, Otago farmers have advantages in the system on which the land is usually sold. A tract of country

is declared what is called a "hundred," and the land is then opened for sale at one pound per acre. If more than one application be lodged for the same land on the same day, it is put up to auction, and sometimes brings a considerably advanced price. The purchasers of land within a "hundred" have the exclusive privilege of depasturing stock upon the unsold lands within the hundred in proportion to their purchased property. A small fee or assessment of so much per head, is paid to the Government for this privilege, which, as a matter of course, in time disappears as all the land is sold, and then the land which remains unsold for a few years may be purchased at ten shillings per acre, the entire area of the hundred is thus gradually wholly bought up.

The land varies greatly in fertility throughout the province. That of first-class quality for agricultural purposes is comparatively of limited extent, but there is a great breadth of it of medium description which, as population increases and prices advance, will be brought

under cultivation. A disposition to indulge in exhaustive cropping sometimes shows itself, and though this is excusable where the land yields sixty to seventy bushels of wheat to the acre, it is not confined to such cases, as I have known instances of three and four white straw crops being taken off indifferent land in succession, without any manure being put in. Where such reckless farming is carried on, complaints are sure to be heard that agriculture does not pay.

The chief white crops grown are oats and wheat, with a little barley. A good deal of the former is consumed locally, both threshed and as "oaten hay," but Otago oats also finds its way into the Australian markets, besides being shipped to the northern provinces. Some ten years ago, little or no provincial grown flour was used: it was said to be quite unsuited for bread-making, and large quantities of bread-stuffs were imported from South Australia and California. It is singular that an amount of prejudice, fostered, doubtless, by the importers, then existed against almost everything of local growth, but

these unaccountable misconceptions have, happily, long since disappeared, liberating flour, amongst other things, from the ban of worthlessness. Mills are to be found all over the province, and so far from the Otago-grown wheat being unsuitable for making bread, it is now exported for that purpose to Australia and England. The exportation of grain has assumed large proportions in Canterbury province, on whose extensive plains vast quantities of wheat are grown. This trade, both in Canterbury and here, will infallibly receive a great impetus from the extension of the railway system lately inaugurated, and now being pushed on by the general government. The cultivation of barley is being encouraged by the brewers and distillers offering prizes for malting barley. Malt, to our shame be it spoken, is still imported from England. Over £20,000 was sent out of the colony for malt in 1872. Potatoes thrive well here, and as yet the dreaded potato disease has not made its appearance. Turnips, however, are not so successfully cultivated, as

they are often destroyed by the green fly or aphix, but this is not of much importance where stall-feeding is not resorted to, to any great extent. The cultivation of several new crops have been proposed from time to time, but, notwithstanding that the government did everything to foster such attempts, by importing from Germany quantities of the seed of the sugar beet, and European flax from Ireland, and distributing them amongst the colonists, I have not heard of either crop being extensively cultivated, nor, so far as I know, have any practical results emanated from the attempts.

Hitherto the agricultural settlers on the gold-fields have been on a different footing from those in other parts of the province. Land within a gold-field, until the passing of the "Otago Waste Lands Act 1872," could not be sold at once, but leases for purposes of cultivation were obtainable at a rental of half-a-crown per acre, and at any time after the expiration of three years, if certain conditions as to improvements had been complied with, the lessee was

entitled to purchase the freehold at twenty shillings per acre if the land were not auriferous, and an opportunity is always afforded to the miners of opposing the alienation of land within the gold-fields in this way. The leases could only be granted in localities where the land was not in the possession of a pastoral lessee, or where the inhabitants had induced the government to give him compensation, and he had given up part of his run for that purpose.

Now the system is changed, in so far that where no pastoral lease exists, land is saleable in the gold-fields at once, and agricultural lessees may, after three years, instead of purchasing the freehold outright, change their lease for one for seven years at the same rent—with this difference, that the rental goes in extinction of the purchase money, so that at the end of the term of his lease the lessee is entitled to a "Crown grant," or transfer of the freehold without further payment. These "leases on deferred payments," as they are characterised, may also be granted in blocks set apart for that purpose

by the superintendent and Provincial Council. In such cases a license to occupy for three years, on certain conditions and at a rent of half-a-crown an acre, is first granted, and thereafter the occupier may either purchase the land occupied (but not exceeding 200 acres) at seventeen shillings and sixpence per acre, or obtain a lease on deferred payments on similar terms to those already spoken of.

The great bone of contention amongst provincial politicians for many years has been the Land laws. Much wordy warfare has been waged over this question, not only in the provincial Council-Hall, but also on the floor of the General Assembly, till the expression, an "Otago land fight," has become proverbial in parliamentary circles. The cry of the agrarian party is, "Land for the people," while the watchword of the pastoral interest is, "Preserve vested rights." The passing of the Land Act of 1872 has for a time quieted the storm, but the administration of the law is now made a subject for squabbling over, and the question

will probably never be set at rest till the last acre has been sold by the Crown. The theory of the French economist, that all lands should belong to the state and be merely leased, would be, if one may judge from our Otago experience, impracticable. Like many another social reform excellent in theory, the practise can only be looked for, or even expected, to work well when man has attained perfection. Bill Styles would still ask why Percival Talbois should hold such large tracts of the public estate while he had none, and say he must send men to Parliament to alter such a state of things ; though Styles might reap a benefit in lessened taxation, he would not be satisfied if Talbois obtained, or even appeared to him to obtain, any advantage he did not enjoy. But this is a wide digression. So, *revenons à nos moutons*. The pastoral party may be designated the conservatives of provincial politics, while the other has assumed the name of liberal.

The class of run-holders, or pastoral tenants of the Crown, comprises for the most part men

of refinement and education, and they are nicknamed by the Liberal party the "squatocracy," from the word squatter, which is also a name frequently applied to them. They hold depasturing lands over large tracts of country, averaging about 50,000 acres; nearly all of the leases have still some ten years to run, and the granting of this extended tenure has doubtless been a hindrance in many instances to settlement. As pioneers, the squatters were undeniably entitled to some consideration, but a decided political mistake was made when, for a greatly increased rental, it is true, an additional ten years and an improved tenure was granted some years ago to such as elected to avail themselves of it, which the run-holders almost without exception did.

I have spoken of these large sheep-farmers as being educated gentlemen. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but not many, not so many probably as in the same class in Australia. The mention of this fact, however, recalls the anecdote of the three Australian squatters who,

having to pass the night from home, occupied the same bed-room. Before going to sleep they conversed for some time, and the subject, as usual, was stock and stations—for the worst of all men I ever came in contact with, for talking what is commonly called “shop,” are squatters. One of the two, who had risen from the position of shepherd to that of flock-owner, was the first to fall asleep, and the other two talked till far on into the night. The conversation turned upon their college days, and finally on classical authors, and as the somnolent sharer of their room awoke from his first sleep his ears caught the somewhat enthusiastic remark, “Ah, yes! Homer must have been a splendid fellow.” With his thoughts still running on the previous conversation, the quondam shepherd exclaimed, “Homer, Homer; who’s he; sheep or cattle!”—apparently wondering if there had been any squatter in that neighbourhood with whose name he was not familiar.

Life on a sheep-station is rather a dull one. There are periodical “musterings” and other

duties to be attended to, and there is the annual important busy season, the "shearing," when all is stir and bustle, and the shearing-shed presents a brisk scene. At this time extra hands are engaged for the purpose of shearing the sheep, and as they are paid by the number shorn, they consequently endeavour to shear as many sheep as possible in a day. A good man will get through a hundred sheep, or even more, and will earn for his day's work from fifteen shillings to one pound, and this with rations: not bad payment; but the work is severe; they stand at their work and bend over the sheep, and between their exertions and the heated atmosphere of the shed, perspire more profusely than I ever saw men do, except, perhaps, the "puddlers" in an iron foundry.

When this great business of the year is over, the squatter often allows himself a holiday, and "after shearing" makes a run to town. His calendar appears to circle round this epoch, and events are spoken of as having occurred so long before or after shearing.

In ordinary times the station employees are few in number, and vary, according to the size of the run and ideas of the owner. Two or three shepherds, invariably Scotch, and an odd man or two, form the usual staff. The number of the shepherds employed have of late years been decreased on many stations, from the extensive system of fencing which has been adopted. Miles upon miles of wire fences have been erected, and this saves the cost of a shepherd to "keep the boundary." Notwithstanding this, shepherds need not fear obtaining employment, and wages are still good. £50 to £60 per annum and "found"—*i. e.*, provided with rations—being the ruling rate. The odd man often fills the position of bullock-driver where a bullock team is kept, and if such be the case, he is pretty certain to be a rough customer. The proverb, "to swear like a trooper," would be more intelligible in colonial ears if bullock-driver were substituted for the last word. I suppose this arises from the fact that the team is mainly guided by the voice, and

as bullocks are at times stubborn, the words of direction are aided by expletives. I have heard a man assert that it was no use his trying to work his team unless he swore heartily at them all round. There is a story told of one of these station-hands, which is worth repeating. He was engaged in carting potatoes, which were put into his dray without being bagged. In the course of his journey, which was but a short one, he had to go up a pretty steep incline, and by some means the tail-board of the dray was jolted out of its place, so as to allow the potatoes to escape, a few at a time. Just as the top of the pinch was gained, the man looked round and saw his potatoes chasing one another in an unbroken stream to the foot of the hill. His disgust can be more easily imagined than described. On reaching home he related the occurrence to his master, who said "How you must have sworn, Bill! I am glad I was not there to hear you." "No sir, I did not," said Bill. "What! not swear? I can hardly believe that." "No," said Bill

again, "I did not try it, because I didn't think I could have done the occasion justice."

The squatters are a class who must inevitably become extinct before many years are over, but their places as stock-owners will be supplied by large free-holders. A great deal of the land in Otago is only suitable for depasturing purposes, and several large blocks have already been disposed of. So long as only pastoral land is sold in this way, no one can complain, but when the run-holders are allowed to acquire land suitable for agriculture, the Liberal party have some cause for dissatisfaction. But even this I would hardly grudge them, were I certain that they would remain here, but when the profits are withdrawn to be spent in Piccadilly, it is high time to look for a remedy.

The breed of sheep maintained is the merino. In cultivated lands the Leicester is the favorite, and the two are by many crossed with beneficial results. The Cheviot, the popular breed of the Scottish border, is almost unknown. In the southern part of the province flock-owners

have sometimes to contend with a poisonous plant called the tutu (*coriaria ruscifolia*), commonly pronounced toot; it, however, is quite local, and is the only enemy which does much harm to the flocks. The properties of the plant are very strange, and it may yet prove to be of commercial value as a medicinal herb. To cattle reared where it grows it is innocuous, and proves fattening fodder, but if a hungry bullock unaccustomed to its use should browse upon its tempting leaves, it will soon be seized with a species of mania, causing it to career and tumble about with violent paroxysms till the poor brute falls exhausted and dies. If attended to in time the animal may be cured, bleeding being often a remedy. Sheep do not seem to become so thoroughly accustomed to the use of it as cattle, and those feeding amongst it, on being dogged or driven, are apt to be affected by it, or be, as the phrase is, "tutued." I have known of sheep, feeding for weeks where the tutu grew thick and rank, on being moved a few hundred yards to a paddock where there were

only a few straggling plants, being poisoned by them, and begin to drop down in dozens; whether this was only owing to the excitement of driving, or to some difference in the plant in the two localities, I cannot tell. Sheep get over the effects more easily than cattle, but it leaves more lasting results. A sheep which has been badly tutued and recovers, loses its gregarious habits, and becomes what the shepherds call a "hermit." It also acquires an additional amount of stupidity, but yields no worse mutton. Squatters whose runs include high country sometimes lose sheep through snow, but this may generally be avoided with care, and there are many more risky occupations than that of an Otago run-holder.

One source of annoyance to the squatters is the "swagsmen," as they are called, or men who travel about the country, professedly in search of work, but who do not in reality want it. These men always arrive at a station just about night-fall, and as the nearest house is many miles away, they have to be fed and housed

for the night, and as this is a matter of frequent occurrence, it sometimes becomes a serious tax. The form of asking for work is usually gone through, and they occasionally earn a few shillings, enough to keep themselves in beer and tobacco while on the road, but if set to any really hard work, they generally find some excuse to throw up the job, and move on. So long as these men can obtain a living without working for it, they prefer to do so, and grumble about their hardships to any one who will listen to them.

CHAPTER XVI.

Allocations.

I HAVE already alluded to the diversities of employment which some men in the colonies undertake, but besides this there is a great difference between the duties to be performed in connection with many occupations here, and similar callings in the parent country.

A British bank clerk has a very humdrum life, and so has a colonial one, in a large town, but their work has little resemblance to that of a "banker" at the diggings' agency. The different banking institutions oppose one another very hotly at times in the colonies, and when this is the case the opposition is sure to be fiercest on the gold-fields. From this cir-

cumstance an irregular manner of conducting business, especially in the matter of hours, has been introduced. The banker must be ready to buy gold at almost any time of the day or night; in fact most business is transacted in the evening, and even till late at night, as the miners prefer selling their gold after dark, as this does not break in upon their working hours, and I have seen a bank clerk turn out of bed at a very early hour in the morning to oblige a customer, which he did though in *déshabille*. This is very tiresome to one who has been accustomed to the regularity of a large town, where the door is strictly closed to the outside public early in the afternoon.

But strange though this may be, it is not so strange as the going long distances to buy gold. The contest for gold is so keen that the bank agent sometimes spends as much of his time in the saddle as in the office. Instead of waiting till the miners and storekeepers bring in their gold for sale, he starts off with as much, or even more than a couple

of thousand pounds in bank notes in his valise, and a revolver in his belt, to visit such outlying diggings as are not large enough to support an agency, and sometimes he will be away from home on these journeys for a night or two, returning with a considerable weight of gold. This species of banking begets in a novice a great feeling of responsibility, but it is astonishing how quickly it wears away.

I can vividly recall my own early experiences in this department on the occasion of my first journey, carrying a large sum in cash to buy gold. I had a lonely road, or rather bridle track to travel through the hills, and on my way I frequently felt for my revolver, and made sure that it would slip from its case easily. Arrived at my destination, I sought out the party of miners with whom I expected to have dealings, and found they were not ready, and would not be till the evening. While I was waiting about, and hugging my bag of filthy lucre in a most affectionate manner, another banker arrived on the scene from the opposite direction, belonging,

of course, to an opposition establishment. Then an attempt was made by the miners to get an advanced price out of either of us. Eventually I was successful in securing the parcel, and I proceeded to the miners' hut to clean and weigh the precious metal.

Whilst I was engaged in doing so, I learned that the remains of a woman, who had been a servant at the hotel at which I had put up rather more than a year before, and who had disappeared suddenly no one knew where, had just been discovered in a wild gully far up the mountain behind the township. There was no doubt as to the identity of the skeleton; the teeth in the upper jaw, being of peculiar form, were recognised by several people. Conjecture was rife as to how she had met her end, but all concurred that there had been foul play. By the time I had cleaned, or "blown" the gold, it was too late to think of returning, so I went back to the hotel, with the intention of sleeping there. As it was already pretty late, and I was desirous of making an early start next

morning, I proposed at once retiring to rest. The landlord, whose appearance was very far from prepossessing, so much so that he might be said to have "Hobart-town in every feature," was excessively greasy and officious. "He'd give me a room behind the bar, next his own, where I would be both secure and comfortable. Mr. So-and-so always occupied the same room when he stayed over-night." I wished him good-night rather sulkily, for I felt sufficiently anxious without his adding to it by his disagreeable manner.

When left alone, my imagination ran riot. I associated this ugly old publican with the murdered woman, and instead of proximity to his bed-room imparting a feeling of security, it was now the reverse. I could not lock the door, for lock there was none, and if there had been it would have proved but of slight service, for the door was only a wooden frame covered with green baize. The walls on three sides were of the same material, while the fourth was of calico, papered. I was tired with the, to me,

unwonted exercise of riding, and very sleepy from the exposure to the fresh air; but the horrible thought would intrude itself, that if I did fall asleep, I should only awake to feel a cold steel at my throat, and then know nothing more. Two hundred ounces of gold, besides several hundred pounds in cash, was a prize worth securing. I strapped my valise to my leg, and lay with my hand on the butt of my revolver, ready for any emergency, and thus passed a sleepless but uneventful night. Very soon I got accustomed to this kind of work, and laughed at myself for my idle fears, but the acquisition of the experience in the first instance was not pleasant.

I think it says a good deal for the honesty of our population, that in Otago there have been almost no cases of highway robbery, or "sticking up," as it is spoken of in the colonies. In the first few years of the diggings there were, I think, two, or at most three cases of gold buyers being stuck up, and, considering the number of opportunities, and the facilities

for committing the crime, this number must be considered small.

I have spoken of cleaning the gold before buying it. To accomplish this well is the first requirement of a bank clerk on the diggings. The means adopted is very simple, and yet it requires skill to effect it thoroughly. The gold, when it is such as is usually obtained in Otago, is in water worn pieces, from the size of a small bean or pea down to the finest dust. The miners leave a considerable quantity of sand amongst this, which has to be got rid of by means of blowing. The gold is placed on a flat pear-shaped metal dish, with a perpendicular rim or edge, except at the point of the pear, where there is no rim. This is moved in such a manner that the gold is tossed up, and all the finer particles and dirt are worked forward towards the opening, out by which the operator blows the sand. The tossing and blowing are repeated again and again till the whole is sufficiently clean. Sometimes the process is much more arduous than at others, as, where the

sand is heavy and the gold fine, the task of separating them is harder. In any case it is tiresome work to have much of it continuously.

Bank agents at stations had often to put up with very inferior accommodation for conducting their business ; at first they had merely tents, afterwards sheds covered with the thinnest of iron. Now the size of the building is improved, but the material is still for the most part wood or corrugated iron. But even a tent was deemed quite secure when the agency possessed a safe. A fellow-clerk in the same bank told me that he had, he believed, injured his health by his anxiety while carrying on business in a tent, at the first of a rush, without a safe, and that when a Milner's patent at length arrived, he felt more relieved than he could express. Other difficulties besides those I have mentioned have sometimes to be encountered. I have known of a bank agency so destitute of stationery, which was not to be procured on the spot, that recourse was had to sixpenny passbooks

for ledgers and brown paper for credit and debit slips.

It might be thought that the business of the learned professions would be conducted in much the same manner here as in the old country; and as regards divinity and medicine there is little if any difference. Some years ago the fair fame of the medical faculty was sullied by its numbering in its ranks several knaves and charlatans. Happily those quacks have been driven to seek fresh fields for the indulgence of their empiricism by the interference of the legislature, which requires every medical man to register his diploma, and prevents him practising unless he does so. A slight acquaintance with therapeutics is very desirable knowledge for a colonist, as the services of an amateur have sometimes to be called into requisition, and happy the patient if the quasi-doctor is not one who has more idea of treating a horse or a cow than a human being.

I remember one fellow, a storekeeper, telling us how once on a time he had treated an

unfortunate miner who had got his leg badly cut while at work in his claim, and who sent to the store for a box of Holloway's Ointment. The storekeeper had none, but he was equal to the emergency, and, spreading a little salt butter on a rag, hastened to the scene of the accident and bound up the wound. The injured man protested that the salve gave him great additional pain, but he was assured that arose from the nature of his wound alone, and was requested to pay half-a-crown down at once for the box of ointment he was supposed to have had. The storekeeper admitted he was a little non-plussed when next day the man sent for the remainder of his box, but he got out of the difficulty in a manner which was more satisfactory than creditable to himself, by saying that he was not going to keep a half empty box of ointment knocking about, and that he had thrown it away.

As regards the profession of law, the chief difference between the colony and England lies in the non-separation of the two branches of the profession. Nominally they are distinct,

but a barrister may practise as a solicitor and *vice versa*. Consequently many who are really solicitors devote themselves to the bar, and such anomalies exist as a firm of solicitors giving a brief to one of their own partners, with, as a matter of course, the usual fee. Lawyers absolutely swarm, and the profession is now overcrowded—admission to its ranks not being a matter of very great difficulty, and premiums for articled clerks having hitherto been almost unknown. Members of the bar, and solicitors who have been admitted to practise in England or her dependencies, are permitted to practise here on passing an examination in New Zealand law. One of our judges (they being the examiners) was in the habit of putting one or two hard general questions to such candidates for admission, “to see what they were made of,” and an answer once given him to a *viva voce* question has seldom been surpassed for cool readiness. The formula adopted in putting the question was, “If a client told you so and so, what course would you pursue?”

“Ask for a payment to account of costs,” was the prompt reply.

One species of the genus lawyer is rapidly becoming extinct in Otago. They are called “bush lawyers,” and flourished chiefly on the gold-fields and in up-country towns, whence they are being supplanted by the younger branches of the profession. The bush lawyers, or mining agents, which is the name they accept, are often men who have acquired some knowledge of law as lawyers’ clerks, and are of great use to the diggers. Miners are rather a litigious set of fellows, induced no doubt by their having to make many of their applications in respect to mining matters, to the warden in open court, when objections are heard, and the application decided judicially. Consequently some bush lawyers made money, and if a bill of costs which I inspected was a criterion of their charges, it was no wonder. In the case I refer to, a will had been prepared, which could with ease have been written on a sheet of ordinary note paper, for which eight guineas

was the modest remuneration demanded, including an item of three guineas "for waiting up all night to get the will signed," a proceeding, I was informed, wholly unnecessary, and induced mainly by a desire to partake freely of the sick man's "grog." The mining agents did not by any means confine themselves to conducting mining cases, but also appeared in the district courts, and I have seen a gentleman whose designation was "of the Middle Temple, barrister-at-law," engaged in arguing a case, his "learned friend" on the other side being an ex-sergeant of police. It was said of this latter worthy, who, except when "on circuit," devoted his energies to keeping a public-house, that he amassed two thousand pounds in less than four years by his practice as a bush lawyer. Some idea of his fitness may be formed from his remark to the district court judge, when talking about a stream which lost itself in a shingly plain. He said, "The water sinks into the shingle and *perlicates* down to the river."

Such men, however, were perhaps quite good

enough to conduct cases in the early times, before some of the justices who acted temporarily as wardens. One of these gentlemen, it is said, after getting through a petty case with some difficulty, and desiring to inflict the extreme penalty, expressed his disapproval of the defendant's conduct in most severe terms, and was winding up his peroration with the words "I fine you," when he suddenly stopped, looked puzzled, and asked the clerk of court in a stage whisper, "What should it be?" Receiving no reply, he appealed to the sergeant of police, but that functionary seemed to have his whole attention rivetted to a spot on the opposite wall; the justice lost all patience, and burst out with, "I fine you the whole lot, sir!" rather a puzzling sentence, certainly.

The entire surroundings of justice in those times were hardly such as to inspire awe. A court-house of canvass lined with druggeting is not an imposing edifice, at least, in one instance, it apparently was not sufficient to convince a raw Irish policeman, who was filling the post

of crier, of his inferiority to the dignitary on the bench ; for on being told to call the plaintiff in a case, he went to the door and, after lustily bawling the name, returned saying, "No appearance ; dishmiss the case."

CHAPTER XVII.

Natural Objects.

A STRANGER on his first arrival from Britain is usually disappointed at the *un-foreign* appearance of his surroundings as regards natural objects. The weeds he finds growing in the streets are identical with those he has left in his native town; the grass in the fields is English; and he may perchance recognise the song of the chaffinch or thrush from the neighbouring thicket. The general aspect of the distant forest presents nothing to attract the eye, as strange or new, and he may note with dissatisfaction that the only discernible difference from an English

wood is, that the foliage is duller and more sombre. The sentiments excited by this state of affairs are varied; the pleasure of recognising old friends is mingled with disappointment at the want of new acquaintances.

Let the traveller wander, however, away from "the busy haunts of men," only a short distance towards the "bush," as the natural forest is designated, and he finds, combined with greater sylvan beauty, a contrast, indeed, to any British scene he can recall. On the outskirts of the bush he may perchance cross the clearing of some industrious settler, the rough log fence of which, as well as the white bleached stumps sticking up here and there through the green luxuriant grass, somehow carries him back to those tales read in his boyhood of American Indian life—while the rude hut built of the black stems of the tree fern, though not an orthodox log cabin, strengthens the association. Let him pass on and enter the bush; and before he has penetrated many

yards he finds himself repeating the opening lines of Evangeline :—

“This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the
hemlocks,
Bearded with moss and with garments green, indistinct in the
twilight,
Stand like druids of old, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.”

Pressing on to the deeper recesses of the dense forest, through a deep undergrowth of shrubs and saplings, interlaced at times with the long trailing branches of the bush “lawyer” (*rubus australis*), whose inverted hooks take a most tenacious hold of the passer-by, and, if not carefully dealt with, are likely to prove dangerous to his attire; or the long, leafless, cane-like stems of the supple-jack (*rhypogonum scandens*), which prove an obstructive yet, as compared with the other, a harmless object. Pausing to rest awhile, the profound silence which prevails is almost oppressive. No life is visible; animals there are none; but where else could one look for birds? A short way back the peculiar bell-like notes of the moko-

moko or bell-bird (*anthornis melanura*) were heard, and further on the harsh chatter of the parraquet (*platycercus novæ zealandiæ*) grated on the ear. Now the ear seeks as vainly as the eye for signs of life; even the murmuring "sough" of the breeze through the tree-tops has ceased, and the only sound to be distinguished is the half-stifled prattle of a brook at no great distance.

We shall go thither, and, seating ourselves in a grove of tree ferns, admire the scene. If animal life be wanting, vegetable life abounds in both luxuriance and beauty. And even the former is now represented, for from a branch a few feet distant the bright-eyed New Zealand robin (*petroica albifrons*) is curiously watching our movements. Larger than his European congener, whom he resembles only in his build and movements, he is dressed in a suit of rusty black, with a considerable display of sadly-soiled linen in place of the familiar red-breast. Over a larger pool in the stream too, a fantail (*rhypidura flabellifera*)

is flitting about catching flies. 'Tis a pretty little bird, less than a wren, with a dark back and head, but lighter underneath; its chief feature, however, is the tail of long white feathers, which, though longer than itself, the little bird spreads out and flirts about like the fan of a Spanish coquette. A small flight of canaries (*orthonyx ochrocephala*) passes overhead, their attempts at music being but a poor burlesque of the performances of the caged songsters "of that ilk." But these slight evidences of animal life only help to impress the tenantless condition of the bush more fully upon one.

In one respect this lack of life is not to be regretted. When an Australian first visits the New Zealand bush, he gives thanks a thousand times for the absence of snakes, from whose fangs there would be little chance of escape amidst the dense vegetation. When St. Patrick bestowed his blessing upon the Emerald Isle, and expelled the reptilia, some of the potency of the spell must, I think, have permeated the

earth till it reached our antipodean regions, for, save some harmless lizards, reptiles we have none.

The large trees of the forest are noble patriarchial giants, the red (*dacrydium cupressinum*, native name remu) and black (*podocarpus ferruginea*) pines and the totara (*podocarpus totara*) yielding excellent, and, especially the first and last, prettily grained timber. The wood of the white pine (*podocarpus dacrydioides*) is softer, but is also useful, and has the advantage of being free from knots. These pines, and also most of the trees and shrubs of the bush, are evergreens. The few exceptions, such as the kowai (*sophora tetraptera*) and tree fuschia (*fuschia excorticata*), are not numerous enough to make any difference in the appearance of the bush in winter. Many of the smaller trees and shrubs would be greatly prized by the owners of English shrubberies for ornamental plants. Several of the coprosmas and olearias are eminently suited for such purposes, but, in common with most New Zealand bush trees and plants,

they are very difficult to grow away from the friendly shade and shelter of their accustomed forests.

The chief beauty of Otagan bush scenery lies in the ferns. Their growth is profuse and abundant almost everywhere, but the height of their luxuriance and beauty is to be found only in some dense gully in the heart of the bush. Here they attain perfection, from the monarch of the tribe, the lofty tree fern,* rising like some sculptured pillar with a capitol of wide-spreading fronds, to the tiny parasitical trichomanes (*trichomanes venosum*) or hymenophyllum (*hymenophyllum tunbridgense*), which forms the ornamentation of the shaft. They vary, too, in form and texture as they do in size, from the graceful feathery lightness of the *todea hymenophylloides*, or the translucent seaweed-like fronds of the *hymenophyllum dilatatum*, to the stiff leathery appearance of the

* There are four tree ferns common in the neighbourhood of Dunedin — *dicksonia antartica*, *dicksonia squarrosa*, *hemiteliu smithii*, *cyathea dealbata*.

lomaria patersoni. Ferns are everywhere, on the ground, on the trees, and on one another; and the face of yonder rocky cliff is wholly veiled by them. Where the ferns fail, velvet-like mosses of the softest green supply their places; every stump, and even the stones are hid'in "greenery," and, were not flowers wanting, a ferny gully might be mistaken for fairy-land.

But the flowers are not there, nor indeed are they to be found elsewhere. We miss the yellow primrose from the shady banks in spring, we fail to find a foxglove standing ruddy in the summer sun, and the autumn brings no poppies to deck our fields of corn, nor does the purple heather lend its hue to tinge our distant hills. No, alas! we have none of these, and naught to fill their places. The farmer, it is true, prefers to keep his fields free from poppies, the foxgloves and primroses are only to be seen cultivated in garden grounds, and a sprig of his native heath may be found carefully tended in the possession of some patriotic Scot.

The indigenous wild flowers are for the most part insignificant and poor. This is more to be wondered at when we consider how well all imported English plants thrive. Numbers of British weeds and flowers have been accidentally transported hither, and have spread with amazing rapidity. I have seen a sward white as snow with daisies, and the national plant of Caledonia flourishes and maintains its ground in sturdy defiance of legislators and thistle ordinances. But it is not such plants alone that find a congenial soil and climate here; British trees and plants generally grow with a vigour and rapidity surpassing anything they attain in the country to which they belong. The most striking instance of this is to be seen in the case of the common white clover, which will often be met with growing freely far away from any artificial pasture.

By way of compensation for the scarcity of wild flowers, many of the trees and shrubs have abundant blossoms, some of them sweetly scented. For show and splendour nothing can

surpass the brilliancy of the ruta or iron tree (*metrosideros lucida*)—not the true ruta, though often so called—whose mass of scarlet bloom is the boast of the forest. Unfortunately, though plentiful further south, no specimens of this handsome tree grow near Dunedin. In speaking of our native wild flowers, it would be an omission not to mention the clematis (*clematis hexasepala*), whose white star-shaped blossoms are shewn to advantage hung in large clusters from the topmost boughs of some dark green tree, not a leaf or flower being visible throughout the entire length of the long thin climbing stem till it attains an airy altitude. It was proposed that the New Zealand war medal should imitate the flower of this plant, and I believe the idea has been adopted.

Flowering plants are not the only things we lack; of native animals we have now none, though a dog must have existed in the days of the Moa, and there are rumours of a rat at a later period. This last has disappeared wholly, and surrendered the field to his cousin from

Norway. Birds are much more numerous, but many are somewhat local in their distributions, and others again, such as the wood-pigeon (*carpophaga novæ zealandiæ*) and kaka (*nestor meridionalis*), a kind of parrot—both excellent eating, by the way—only come near the settled neighbourhoods at certain seasons. Notwithstanding the numbers of species of birds in New Zealand, one may travel long distances and see nothing but an occasional native lark (*anthus novæ zealandiæ*), running, as they are wont, along a traveller's path, or a solitary hawk sailing leisurely about in the distance.

Settlement is producing changes among our avifauna, as well as our flora, and while some species are seemingly dying out, others, such as the moko-moko and the wax-eye (*zosterops lateralis*), appear to be increasing. The wax-eye is rather interesting, from the fact that it is a self-imported colonist, it having made its appearance and spread over the country since the arrival of the white man. I have been told, but have never had the opportunity of verifying

the statement, that on their first arrival these birds built a pendant nest, and then, discovering there were no snakes here, they changed their style of architecture, and adopted the ordinary cup-shaped form. One of our common birds is rather a notability on account of the strangeness of his plumage, as well as the richness of his notes. His name and aspect, but not his demeanour, are clerical, for the parson-bird (*prothemadera novæ zealandiæ*) is a wonderfully lively merry rogue. He is also known as the tui, and gets his other name from having glossy black plumage, with two of the funniest little tufts of white feathers under his chin. A closer inspection, however, discovers that his apparently black feathers are shot with brilliant and lustrous hues of green and purple, which are, to say the least, decidedly unclerical.

The most celebrated natural curiosities New Zealand possesses are the remains of the extinct gigantic birds, all popularly known as the Moa, although some eight or nine different species are distinguishable, some of them differing

widely from others. Considerable attention has from time to time been devoted to these remains, and discussion excited in reference to them. The moot point is the epoch in which these birds lived: some desire to fix the era of their existence at a very distant period; others argue that they must have lived comparatively recently.* There is no doubt but that the moa was hunted and used as food by man, and that a dog was also co-existent with them; but the question is, were these moa-hunters the ancestors of the Maories, or some more ancient race? The bones of these birds being found in ovens in different parts of the colony, mixed with fragments of egg-shell, charcoal, dog and other bones, shells of the fresh-water mussel, and rude stone implements, establishes these facts beyond dispute, and, although the absence of traditions among the Maories as to the moa, evidences antiquity, yet, on the other hand, the

* Those interested in the subject will find several able papers bearing upon it in Vol. IV. of the "*Transactions of the New Zealand Institute.*" Trubner & Co. Lond. 1872.

fact that bones and egg-shells have been found on the surface of the ground, is antagonistic to such a supposition.

I have myself seen, in close proximity to the ovens or middens on the Maniatoto plain, countless minute fragments of moa egg-shells lying on the surface of the ground, and, even admitting that there is very little rainfall in that part of Otago, I cannot believe that these fragments have withstood other atmospheric influences for even a tythe of the time which some hold has elapsed since the moa ceased to live. This seems to be further corroborated by the discovery in a cave of a portion of a moa's neck, with the dried flesh, skin, and feathers partially covering it. Some bones of a giant raptorial bird (*harpagornis moorei*) have also been exhumed. I do not know what size this bird is supposed to have been, but the hawk which preyed on the fourteen feet high moas, must prove a formidable rival to the roc of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

The absence of fish from our rivers has always

been a matter of wonder and regret to the colonists, and many a sigh has been heaved over "a capital trout stream," over which it is hopeless to throw a fly. Nothing but gigantic eels were to be caught in the rivers, and they afforded but sorry sport to a genuine disciple of old Izaak Walton. The manner most frequently adopted for catching eels, called "bobbing," is primitive enough, and is by means of a line formed of narrow stripes of flax leaves, to the end of which is tied a bundle of earth worms. The eels bolt the "bob," and are readily pulled out of the water, the same bait serving again and again.

The evident suitability of our streams and rivers for trout has led to their being introduced, and the Acclimatization Society have already stocked several streams, the trout attaining a large size very rapidly. Several attempts to stock the rivers with salmon have also been made, and the last one is, so far, prosperous, some hundreds of young fish having been successfully hatched. If the rivers be

destitute of fish, the seas are not, and, anomalous as it may appear, the best and most highly esteemed sea-fish is one which is never caught with net or line. It is only known from being in frosty weather thrown up by the ocean. It is a long ribbon-like fish, frequently exceeding four feet in length, while the breadth is less than four inches. Why it is that it should be cast up by the sea, and that only in frosty weather, is a question still to be solved, but from this circumstance it is known amongst the colonists as the frost-fish (*lepidopus candidatus*).

Some slight reference has already been made to the New Zealand fish from a commercial point of view. One which is likely to prove of great value in this respect, being well adapted for preserving, is the habuka (*oligoris gigas*). It is tolerably abundant, and is the largest of our edible fishes, often weighing from forty to sixty pounds, while larger specimens have been caught nearly twice these weights. It is excellent eating, especially

the head and shoulders, which form a noble dish.

On some parts of the coast, shells are found in considerable variety, but in the neighbourhood of Dunedin the beaches furnish little to interest the conchologist. The beautiful iridescent shell of the mutton-fish (*haliotis iris*), so greatly used for inlaying papier mache goods, is not uncommon in the south.

Rather a pleasant feature in Otago, in the eyes of many, is the absence of noxious insects. In a few places mosquitoes are found, and in others the sand-flies are troublesome, but with these exceptions the insects are innocuous. Wasps, earwigs, ants, and such like bugbears of young ladies at English pic-nic parties, are wanting, and although insect life is tolerably plentiful, it is not disagreeably obtrusive as in Australia. Butterflies are scarce, both as regards numbers and variety. The collector would probably recognise with pleasure among their ranks the painted lady (*vanessa cardua*), and another (*pyrameis gonerilla*) which at first

sight he might mistake for the English red admiral (*v. atalanta*), as the only difference on the upper side is in the marginal markings on the lower wings. An entomologist would find a large and comparatively unexplored field of labour in Otago.

The climate of Otago is a singularly healthy one, and, notwithstanding that some parts of the country are rather humid, while others are too dry, both are equally salubrious. This is evidenced by the way in which all introduced plants and animals flourish and thrive. Whether they be cereals, or domestic animals brought by the settlers, forest trees, song-birds, or wild animals introduced by the acclimatization societies, or even weeds, or the domestic fly imported by accident, they all adapt themselves readily to this favoured land. The societies mentioned have been very active, and have successfully acclimatized numerous favourite songsters and insectivorous birds, as well as pheasants, partridges, deer of various kinds, hares, and other game, so that, what with in-

troduced as well as native game, the sportsman of the future need not fear for lack of material for his favourite pastime. Rabbits have, where the soil is favourable for burrowing, increased to such an extent as to be a nuisance, and I have heard of a station-holder in Marlborough province who found it requisite to employ three men to keep the rabbits down, otherwise his sheep would have been starved. When the subsoil is a stiff clay, and they do not burrow deep, the cats and hawks keep them under.

Rabbits are not the only things that thrive too well: even some trees, it is said, grow too quickly to produce good timber. This has been proved to be the case with some of the English deciduous trees, especially farther to the north. One ash tree in Nelson, which in twenty years had grown to a size it would not have attained in England in half a century, was blown down, and its great limbs were found to be quite brittle, the rapid growth having caused it to lose its characteristic toughness. This is probably in some measure occasioned

by the want of a sufficient check in winter. In Otago this want would not be so greatly felt, for our winters are more severe, but still we have nothing to compare with the severity of a British winter. The scarlet geraniums in the Dunedin gardens pass through the winter season unscathed, and the earliest spring flowers generally see the last of those of autumn.

One of the chief causes of complaint against the New Zealand climate is that it is windy, and the impeachment cannot be altogether denied; but we are amply compensated by the delicious purity and clearness of the atmosphere. I have often heard it remarked that the moon is much brighter here than on the other side of the globe, and doubtless any apparent difference is owing to this cause. Another astronomical object which often attracts the attention of those from the northern hemisphere, is the constellation of the Southern Cross, but it does not do so pleasingly, for apparently their expectations have not unfrequently been raised by descriptions of "the glorious and brilliant con-

stellation of the Southern Cross," whereas in reality it is more than rivalled by Ursa Major.

Malcontents occasionally grumble, too, about the sudden changes of temperature, and it cannot be denied but that they have some grounds for complaint. These changes, however, do not appear to have any prejudicial effects on the general health. The almost invariable coldness of the nights, even in the hottest weather, is remarkable; but this, no doubt, prevents that enervation which is caused by the heat in summer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Adjacent Islands.

THE individual who first gave the names of North, Middle, and South islands to the two composing New Zealand and the small one lying immediately to the south of the other two, must have possessed a mind somewhat resembling that of the worthy minister of the Cumbrays (two small islands in the Firth of Clyde), who used to pray for a blessing "on the great Cumbray and the little Cumbray, and the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland." Although the names indicated are still kept up on the maps, in ordinary conversation the expression South Island is understood to apply to the Middle Island of the maps, and

the South Island proper is usually designated Stewart's Island.

Stewart's Island, which is somewhat triangular in shape, is about fifty miles long, and its greatest breadth is about thirty miles. It is separated from the mainland by Foveaux Strait, some twelve to sixteen miles wide. Who the Stewart was whose name has thus survived him is wrapped in oblivion, but one tradition says that he was a whaler who brought Bloody Jack Te Rauparaha and his followers from the north, when they came down and slaughtered wholesale the Maori tribes of the south. Mount Anglem, or Hananiu, the highest land in the island, is 3,200 feet high, and though the whole is hilly the slopes are gentle. The greater part is thickly wooded, and a more magnificent spectacle cannot be imagined than these forests present in the summer when the iron-wood trees are in flower. The masses of brilliant scarlet contrasting with the various shades of green, produce an effect which, if once seen, will never be forgotten. There are several fine

harbours in the island, Paterson Inlet, the largest of them, being a noble sheet of water, fifteen miles long, studded with several islands.

On one of the largest of these, Coopers' Island, an enterprising individual has settled, and actually, as our American cousins would say, "runs a store." Who his customers can be it is difficult to imagine, for besides a few hands employed by himself in cutting timber, and some four or five German families who have settled on the mainland, there are no inhabitants. The island has a few Maori residents, or perhaps only visitants, for the purposes of sealing and fishing. There is also one inhabitant who must not be forgotten, as he earns his livelihood by supplying the Dunedin market with the splendid oysters which abound there.

Stewart's Island is destined not to remain much longer uninhabited, as its many capabilities have caused it to be chosen by the government as a site for a special settlement. A large building has been erected for the temporary accommodation of the immigrants, and

it is purposed establishing there a colony of fishermen. A small party of Shetlanders have quite recently been sent down as pioneers.

In Foveaux Strait there are several islets, the largest of which is Ruapuke and Dog Island. The latter is only noticeable from the fact of its having a lighthouse 118 feet high, while the former is peopled by Maories. Ruapuke contains some eight square miles, and is the residence of John Tope or Toby, as he is popularly called, one of the chiefs of the southern natives. He has a large flock of sheep on the island, and is well to do. I remember once travelling in the same steamer with him. We had among the saloon passengers a young fellow just from India, who had been talking very boastfully of his black servants and his treatment of them, and when John Tope, Esq. joined the steamer at the Bluff, the purser had him put in the same cabin with the would-be Nabob. The most of the passengers were on the alert, expecting a row. Not long after we had set sail again, the young Nabob, as we shall call him,

went to his cabin and found this old Maori there ; he quickly backed out again, and, calling the steward, asked what that black fellow was doing in his cabin. He was informed that the gentleman was a passenger. Master Nabob was furious, and protested against the indignity, but all to no purpose, for he had to put up with his coloured cabin mate, the other passengers enjoying a laugh at his discomfiture, and, it is needless to add, he didn't trouble us with any more of his Indian experiences. A Norwegian gentleman travelling in New Zealand, once said to me that he had been greatly struck with the difference in the treatment by the English of the native races in this country and India—the blacks in India, especially the lower classes, being treated with undisguised contempt, while in New Zealand the Maori is not only tolerated but well treated.

It may perhaps occasion surprise to some readers that no mention is made in these pages of the Maories beyond a mere passing allusion. But I must inform my English readers—for it

could only be some of them who would be likely to wonder at this—that the aboriginal natives in this great province of Otago are to be numbered in hundreds, there being only about five or six small villages or “kaiks” studded along the coasts. A tatooed Maori in Dunedin streets would attract nearly as much attention as he would do if he were set down in an European town. And this applies equally to all the southern provinces. Before it was taken possession of by the British colonists, the middle island of New Zealand was, comparatively speaking, uninhabited.

The Chatham islands perhaps hardly come within the category of islands adjacent to Otago, being nearer to the neighbouring province of Canterbury, with the capital of which the trade of the islands is chiefly carried on; but as vessels from the group do sometimes visit our port, and as I have recently had a description of them from a friend who has just returned thence, I shall say a word or two about them. The group, which lies some 370 miles to the

north-east, comprises one large island and several smaller ones, many of the latter being merely rocks. The large island contains about 300,000 acres of dry land, and comprises within its area several lakes, the largest of which, lake Wahanga, is twenty-five miles in length, thus raising the total superficial area considerably. The higher grounds in the interior are in places morasses, not unlike Highland peat bogs, but nearer the coast the land is of excellent quality, and has formerly been mostly covered with light bush.

Large clearings have been made by the Maories, and English grasses having been introduced, they have spread through all the bush, making every clearing and natural opening a beautiful grass paddock. Droves of wild horses roam over the island. Many of these are caught by being driven into the denser thickets, and secured to be shipped to New Zealand. The Maories, to whom the lands belong, lease large tracts of country as sheep runs to white settlers. Sheep thrive very well, and, besides the pasture already spoken of, the leaves of nearly every

tree in the bush furnish superior fodder, upon which all the domestic animals fatten. The climate is a healthy one, and as there is no frost, the grass is green throughout the year.

The present white settlers, who all appear to be making a comfortable living, number about a hundred. The Maori population was at one time considerable, but it has been much reduced of late years by emigration to New Zealand, as many as four hundred having left at once for Taranaki some years since. From an ethnological point of view, however, the most interesting inhabitants are the Moriories, they being a distinct race from the Maori, and, as some say, were the original inhabitants of New Zealand before the Maori made his way thither from the islands of the Indian Archipelago. The remnant of this nation still lingers in the Chathams, now a miserable race numbering between eighty and ninety, many of them stunted and deformed. There are among their number a few very old men, who must, in their younger days, have been fine-looking; but the Maories, when they

made a descent upon the islands, killed off all the best of them, and kept the remainder as slaves.

The Moriori population, which, at the time of the discovery of the islands, in 1791, was estimated at over 2,000, must at one time have been very large, if one may judge from the quantities of bones which are to be found in different parts, some of these places being described as perfect Golgothas, and nearly every one of the skulls being cracked. In these places are to be found the stone implements of this people; but, as the Maories used them to kill the Moriories rather than, as they said, degrade their own meres, the latter now superstitiously break any of their own stone weapons which turn up. It cannot be many years before the race is altogether extinct, there being only one pure Moriori child, besides one or two half-caste Maori-Moriories.

The population, when numerous, must have subsisted almost entirely on the fish which abound in vast quantities round the islands,

so much so that captains of whaling vessels, which often put into the Chathams for wood and water, say they never saw anything to equal the fish in any part of the world. The Moriories are still very expert fishermen, and will tell you what sort of fish you may expect to catch merely from the appearance of the day and the aspect of the sea. In the preparation and manipulation of their baits, and in knowing exactly where to go to find the fish they want, their unfailing certainty would almost suggest the idea that they had daily bulletins from the depths. The Maories, who are good fishermen also, admit that they are not to be compared to the Moriories.

As a consequence of this abundance of fish, and possibly also carried thither by a strong ocean current flowing from the north, sharks abound. The formidable white shark, too, which is usually a denizen of warmer latitudes, has not unfrequently been seen. The northern current is amply evidenced by the fact that a vessel coming from Auckland always overruns her

reckoning, and also by cocoa nuts, as well as seeds of various New Zealand trees, being washed on the beach. It is probable that it is this current from a warmer latitude which makes the sea so prolific in life of all kinds.

The beautiful sandy beaches are strewn with quantities of small but brilliantly coloured shells, while sponges, zoöphytes, and sea-weeds, are very plentiful. The scenery of the Chathams is in some parts pretty, and in others, on the bolder coasts especially, it is grand. Basalt cliffs, the regularity of whose columns rivals the far-famed Giant's Causeway, sturdily resist the eroding ocean waves. One little island of about three miles circumference, the little Mangari, rises like a wall sheer up for about 900 feet. It is separated by a deep water channel from the larger island of the same name. No one has yet been able to find an access to this rugged isle, which is a greater cause for aggravation than might be supposed; for vast numbers of sea-fowl find habitations in the cliffs, and these are eagerly sought after

by the Maories, who dry the young birds and send them, as well as the feathers and oil, to the north island of New Zealand.

My friend went out with the Maories, bird-catching on some of the other rocks, and in one day they procured six hundred and fifty young albatrosses (*diomedea exulans*). As each of these birds is much larger than a good-sized goose, that number represents a considerable weight of provisions. He also informed me, that from what he saw and could learn, the albatross lays only one egg, and the young bird remains in the nest about eighteen months. I am not aware whether that fact in natural history is generally known, but it confirms what I was once told by an old whaler, except that he said the young bird stayed in the nest for two years. Nor does it seem long to rest and wait "till its wings are stronger," when one considers the immense power of wing possessed by these birds, familiar to every voyager in the southern ocean, who has, in a kind of wondering awe, watched them sail

with motionless wings lazily past the vessel, though the latter was sailing at the rate of twelve or more knots. The awe may in some measure be begotten in most Englishmen from their first acquaintance with the albatross having been acquired from a perusal of Coleridge's weird poem, while the wonder is the result of greater familiarity.

Besides the islands mentioned, the Auckland Islands, lying 180 miles to the south of Otago, have of late years acquired an unenviable notoriety from the wrecks which have occurred there. The stories of the "Grafton," the "Invercauld," and the "General Grant," are still fresh in the memory, and Captain Musgrave's trials and hardships have already been given to the world. It has been proposed to establish a depôt on these islands, so that survivors from any wreck might be saved, in the event of the recurrence of similar disasters. A lease of the islands has recently been granted by the Government to some one who purposes to live there and keep sheep on the islands, *chacun à son goût*!

An offer has also been made to the Government for a lease of some barren rocks south of Stewart's Island, known as the "Snares," the lessee to have the exclusive right of sealing there. This industry, after having been neglected for many years, is again exciting attention. Two expeditions put out from Riverton in the south of Otago last season, and, as the fur-seal (*arctcephalus cinereus*) is killed on these coasts, sealing in a good season is a very lucrative employment.

CHAPTER XIX.

Other Provinces.

ANYONE going home from the colonies is astonished at the ignorance displayed by the "Old folks at home" of colonial geography. Colonists are apt to think that all in England are spectators of their steady rise and progress, and are consequently grievously disappointed at the crase and confused ideas which prevail, even as to the identity of the colonies. "You're going to Dunedin; I have a cousin in Brisbane; you'll perhaps see him," would be no improbable remark to be made to an intending emigrant; but the speaker might with as much reason say to a person going to Aberdeen that he would probably see some one else who was

in Algiers. The new chum who arrives here, full of hope on account of having a pocket full of letters of introduction, is rather annoyed to find that they are of little use to him, as most of them are probably to people in Auckland, more than a week's sail from his port of debarkation, while others are addressed to persons living everywhere but the place he has come to. The want of knowledge thus indicated is bad enough, but it is not so culpable as when gross and glaring errors are made, as they are now and again by English newspapers of high standing.

In the course of these pages incidental mention has been made of some of the other provinces of New Zealand, and as perchance some readers may be a little uncertain, and yet desirous to know something of their whereabouts, I append the present cursory glance at them, which those who know all about New Zealand geography and resources already, and those who prefer blissful ignorance of these subjects, may leave unread.

The islands of New Zealand are divided into nine provinces. Otago, including the late province of Southland, which was originally a portion of Otago, but was separated and established as a distinct province, and after a few years of independent existence has again been reunited, is the most southerly portion of New Zealand. Possessed of a genial yet bracing climate, considerable tracts of highly fertile soil, and large deposits of alluvial gold, Otago has advanced with rapid strides, and has far outstripped all its older neighbours. Some idea of the measure of this advance may be formed from the fact that the population in December 1858 numbered 6,995, while (about twelve years later) in February 1871, the figures stood at 69,491. This rapid increase is in a great measure to be attributed to the sudden influx of population on the discovery of gold. That this increase is not a mere floating population, there are abundant indications on every side, and it is further evidenced by the census tables, which in 1867 shew a slight decrease of about

one per cent caused by the reflux of the wave of 1862, while the increase of 1871 over 1867 is, without considering the re-united Southland, twenty-five per cent.

Auckland, the province in the extreme north of the north Island, comes next to Otago in influence and importance. Being the oldest province of New Zealand and for long the seat of the General Government, it was for many years the best known and leading province, but now she has been distanced by Otago, which shews every indication of being able to keep the lead. The climate of Auckland, and indeed of most of the north island, though truly delightful to live in, appears to be just a shade too hot for the British constitution. Not that it can be called a hot climate either, for notwithstanding that the city of Auckland is about the same latitude as Sydney in New South Wales, the heat is nothing like what has to be endured on the Australian continent; but the appearance of the children, who may be taken as the health barometer of any place, indicates,

from a paleness of complexion, a tendency to an absence of that ruddy and ruddy health which promises so much for the stamina and vigour of future generations of southern New Zealanders. The lead which Otago has attained is so slight that there is not much to boast of: the European population of Auckland in 1871 amounted to 62,335, shewing an increase on the numbers in 1867 of twenty-nine per cent., but this was owing to the rush to the gold-fields at the Thames, the population of which has since dwindled down very materially. The mining on these gold-fields is exclusively quartz, no alluvial gold having been obtained, and the presence of some reefs of fabulous richness has given rise to a great deal of speculation and stock-jobbing.

The Maori wars were always a source of profit to the provinces of the north, and were sometimes, it was alleged in the south, fostered for the sake of the commissariat expenditure, but these wars are happily now a thing of the past, and Auckland, with her fine land and

climate in which vines, lemons, and fruits of all sorts, saving the smaller English ones, grow in wanton luxuriance, will make more real and substantial progress than when pushed ahead and fostered by Government expenditure.

The other provinces of the North Island are Taranaki on the west, Hawkes Bay on the east, and Wellington in the south. The first has been aptly described as the garden of New Zealand, which in verity it is, but the hostile Maories have hindered settlement, and the whole province can only muster 4,480 inhabitants. It is on the coast of this province that the iron or steel sand, as it is sometimes called, is found in illimitable quantities. All attempts to work it to advantage have hitherto failed, but renewed attempts are being made, and doubtless the day is not far distant when it will be turned to a profitable account. Hawkes Bay is only a degree above Taranaki in respect of population, but it has made more material progress in the last few years than the latter province, large tracts of land having been leased

from the Maories for grazing purposes, and occupied as sheep runs, many of them by men from the south. Wellington, the remaining province of the North Island, enjoys the distinction of its capital being the seat of Government, which elevates it to an importance it would not otherwise possess. It owes its greatness only to its central situation, the seat of government having been removed from Auckland at the instigation of the southern members of the Assembly, who objected to being made to journey to the extreme north every year to Parliament, besides the inconvenience which arose, in departments being so far removed from head-quarters.

The town of Wellington received a great fillip from the establishment of the seat of government there, but the province generally has steadily advanced with the rest of the colony. Wanganui, the second town of the province, is a thriving little place. In Wellington, hanging on the skirts of the general government, may be found plenty of pampered Maories,

occupying a place which has been accorded to the aboriginal inhabitants of no other country in the world. One or two of the chiefs are members of the colonial ministry, and many others enjoy government pay as native assessors and similar appointments. These men and their wives and daughters are invited to entertainments at Government House, and the amusing spectacle has been seen of a hoary savage who knew well the flavour of human flesh, clothed and apparently in his right mind, engaged in the endeavour to lift with his hand a whole shape of jelly from the vice-regal supper-table and convey it bodily to his plate. For these dusky "swells" the supper is evidently the chief feature, for it is told in Wellington of one of the Maori belles, that, in giving the "court milliner" directions for a new ball dress, she told her to "leave plenty of room for kai," that is, the food.

Amongst the remarkable natural features of the North Island are the hot springs, which are numerous and of varying temperature, so that

in one a rheumatic patient may enjoy a health-giving bath, and in another boil "kumeras" for his dinner. The strange yet beautiful terraces of coloured silica, each step or terrace containing a clear bath, which are formed in connection with these springs at Rotomahana, are unrivalled by anything throughout the world; and as to the springs, travellers who have seen both say, that the great Gyser itself must yield the palm to some of the hot springs of New Zealand. The district containing these natural wonders was till very recently a sealed book to European travellers; but the beauties of Maori-land are now thrown open to the world, and these attractive recesses invaded by a four-horse coach and its concomitants. A recent writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, speaking of these hot-springs, says: "I believe that Rotomahana will one day be the health-resort of half the world, and its natural beauties and wonders alone will well repay the trouble and expense of a journey to New Zealand."

The provinces in the South or Middle Island

are Nelson and Marlborough, in the north; in the middle, Canterbury and Westland; and Otago to the south. Of these, leaving Otago on one side, Canterbury is the most important. Differing very greatly in its physical features from Otago, Canterbury consists mainly of a vast plain, stretching from the southern alps on the west to the sea-board on the east. The province was originally founded in connection with the Anglican Church, as Otago was with the Free Church of Scotland, but, like Otago, it has since greatly lost its religious distinction.

The principal productions of Canterbury are wool and grain, both of which it largely exports. Christchurch, the capital, will always retain a reminiscence of its origin in the names of its streets, these being named after English sees. It is a scattered town, the ground covered by it measuring a mile square, and it is generally asserted to be the most English-like of colonial towns. How this idea should have arisen, is to some a matter of difficulty to discover, but it is perhaps due to the fact

that the inhabitants have planted many English trees and hedges which may lead colonists to recall old associations. Between Christchurch and Lyttleton, the port, there lies a long-extinct volcano, and through this the Canterbury folks have with great energy driven a tunnel and opened railway communication. This tunnel, from the nature of the hill it traverses, is specially interesting in a geological point of view, besides being a triumph of engineering skill for such a young province.

Westland, which lies, as the name indicates, on the western sea-board, was at one time included in the borders of Canterbury, but remained a *terra incognita* till the discovery of gold in 1865. A road was made across the islands, and carried through the passes of the lofty alps, traversing some of the most magnificent mountain scenery in New Zealand, but still communication with the provincial seat of government was too slow, so much so that the request of the inhabitants of the west coast district to manage their own affairs was granted

them, and their district was separated from the province, and constituted a county. From that anomalous position it has now been raised to provincial honours.

The discovery of gold on the west coast roused for a time the province of Nelson into activity. Nelson is a thriving province, but slow-going compared to some of the others; its chief town, bearing like the province the name of the victor of Trafalgar, has been not inaptly dubbed "Sleepy Hollow." For those who like a quiet life, Nelson has probably few equals as a residence, as it enjoys a picturesque situation and charming climate. In the southern part of the province are large deposits of superior coal, but until quite recently little attention has been bestowed on them, and we in Dunedin draw our supplies of fuel chiefly from Australia. Now, however, this lucrative field for enterprise has been entered upon with every prospect of success.

Of Marlborough, the only remaining province, it is sufficient to state that it also is steadily

advancing with the rest of the colony. It occupies the north-eastern corner, as it were, of the Middle Island. It exports a considerable quantity of timber to other parts of the colony, besides growing the great colonial staple, wool.

CHAPTER XX.

Politics, Statistics, and Conclusion.

PERCHANCE some reader may ask, "What are the provinces which have been spoken of?" I shall not attempt to answer the question fully, which would be impossible in the scope of these pages, but endeavour to give such an inquirer some glimmering ideas of what they are, and their relationship to the Colonial Government, and, if not then satisfied, he must refer to other sources of information, or come and see.

The constitution of New Zealand is somewhat after the model of the United States of America. The provinces have each a miniature parliament or Provincial Council, conduc-

ted with all the recognised parliamentary forms. This body, which is elected for a period of four years, is endowed with legislative powers within certain limits, and each has hitherto conducted all its internal affairs, and transacted all the business relating to emigration, the formation of roads and other public works, education, police, and such like. The executive part of this inferior Government consists of a superintendent, elected by the people for a like term, assisted and advised by an Executive Council, composed of the leaders of the party able to command a majority in the Provincial Council.

The Government of the whole colony comprises the Governor, the representative of the Imperial Government possessing as little real power as the sovereign he represents, and an Upper and Lower House of Assembly. The former, or Legislative Council, is composed of men who are "called" to be members of that august body by the Governor, whereas the Lower House or House of Representatives is,

as the name denotes, an elective assembly. The executive power of the Colonial Government lies in a ministry composed chiefly of members of the Lower House. All legislation of colonial importance is enacted by the colonial parliament. And such matters are dealt with by the General Government as relate to the Judicial, Defence, and Native Departments, the collection of customs revenue, and other taxes ; part of which is paid to the governments of the provinces in which it is levied, for appropriation by the Provincial Councils. Now the conduct of public works and immigration has been added to the functions of the General Government.

Political principles and parties are not so clearly defined here as in England. For many years the parties were designated Provincialists and Centralists—the former being desirous of increasing, or at least maintaining, the powers of the provinces ; while the other party was anxious that the provinces should be treated so that they should gradually merge in the Colonial Government. And that this result is a

mere question of time there can be little doubt, although these parties are for the present almost forgotten in the policy introduced by the Honorable Julius Vogel, the present premier, the leading idea of which is the borrowing of funds for the purpose of constructing railways and reproductive works, and introducing immigrants. All of a conservative cast of mind are to be found in the ranks of the opposition; while the more energetic and sanguine are supporters of the "progressive policy." On both sides are to be found Provincialists and Centralists, the more liberal of the former party supporting the colonial railway scheme, even although they see that the improved inter-communication will do more than anything else to destroy their favorite provincial system.

It is almost amusing to hear some members of the opposition—old foggies who emigrated thirty or forty years ago—speaking against the construction of railways, and exhuming and using to their own satisfaction the trite and threadbare arguments which were in vogue when

they left home. Others appear to be actuated in their opposition only by personal motives, and seem a little jealous that they did not initiate such a policy, and use the same means for promoting the welfare of the colony, feeling like the officers of Columbus when shewn how to make the egg stand, that it was one of those things very easy of accomplishment when the method of doing so was shewn to them.

Of the ultimate success of this policy there can be little, if any, doubt. Railways are being made at an average cost of £5,000 a mile—not only through old settled districts, but also opening up others now destitute of roads, and making them more available for settlement. Without exception, the lines which are now in operation, and which have been made mainly by provincial enterprise, before the initiation of the General Government scheme, are more than paying their working expenses and maintenance; and when that is the case, even if they do not pay a penny more, the advantages de-

rived fully compensate for the interest on the money expended on their construction.

The benefits derived from cheap carriage and rapid communication are nowhere more obvious than in a new country. Amongst these advantages may be mentioned the development of the coal fields of the colony, which have hitherto lain dormant. But now more than one company has been floated for the working of the extensive deposits which are found, as I have mentioned, in the north-west of the Middle Island, and this is mainly due to the initiation of the railway scheme.

New Zealand is somewhat proud, and justly so, of the value of her exports as compared with her population. In 1871, the latest year for which statistics have been published, with a population of 266,986, the value of the exports, according to official returns, was £5,282,084, or within a small fraction of £20 per head of the entire European population of the colony. For the same year the value of the imports of the colony were £4,078,193, thus shewing a con-

siderable balance in favour of the colony. The imports shew a slight inclination to decrease, evidencing that the colony is becoming less dependent on foreign supplies, and more on the progress of local manufactures. The exports, on the other hand, shew a decided increase, their value being, in 1871, 13·78 per cent. in excess of those of 1870, excluding the value of imported goods re-exported from the colony.

It cannot be denied that these authentic figures establish beyond cavil the sound and healthy condition of the colony, which has now reached a point whence her onward progress must inevitably be rapid, and the next decade will show a greater stride than the last, gold discoveries and rushes notwithstanding.

Part of the policy of the Colonial Government is the introduction of large numbers of immigrants, to occupy the lands opened up by the railways, and to assist in making them; and, notwithstanding that very liberal inducements, in the way of assisted passages, have been offered, this part of the scheme has not

proved so successful as it might have done. This is partly owing to the mismanagement incident to the initiation of a new system, the bungling of agents, the higher rates of wages which have been of late prevailing at home, and the counter attractions offered by America and Canada—many being induced to go to these fields for emigration in preference to the Australian colonies, owing to their greater proximity, the length of the voyage to the latter being a deterring obstacle. But the passage hither, though long, is a safe and pleasant one; never yet has a vessel from Britain to Otago been lost, and the voyage to New Zealand is one of the safest in the world.

Travellers on the grand tour round the world will find New Zealand not the least interesting of the lands they will traverse, especially if they will leave the beaten track and pause long enough to visit the interior. The stoppage of the San Francisco route puts difficulties in the way of such tourists; but the re-establishment

of steam communication between America and this country will soon be accomplished, to the mutual advantage of both.

It has been urged by those who delight in detracting from the merits of everything, that New Zealand, from its geographical position, can never become the home of a nation of any importance; but, on the contrary, many hold that her position, the safety of the surrounding seas, and excellence of the harbours, is such that she will command an extensive trade with the vast Australian continent, the States of South America, the many fertile islands of the Pacific, and even with the far-off Flowery Empire, whose people are shewing many symptoms of awakening from the lethargic torpor which has bound them for ages.

But it is not from position alone that the greatness of any land is derived, but from the energy and endurance of her sons. The salubrity of our climate, and brave perseverance of our pioneers of settlement, give abundant promise of the New Zealanders becoming a robust,

hardy, and energetic people, which augurs well for the future greatness of the land, often fondly called, "The Britain of the South." Let us hope that her citizens, while possessing these qualities, may also be,

"Men, high-minded men
. . . . who their duties know,
But know their rights, and knowing dare maintain."

THE END.

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